# THE WAY THE WORLD IS GOING

H·G·WELLS

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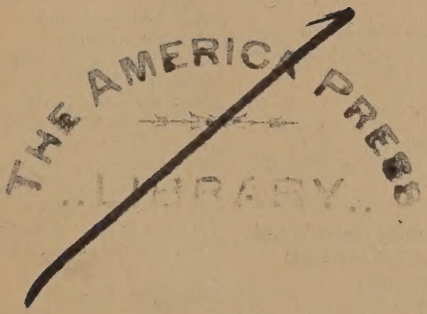
**Wells, H. G. (Herbert George), 1866-1946.**
The way the world is going, guesses & forecasts of the years ahead

THE WAY THE WORLD IS GOING



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# THE WAY THE WORLD IS GOING

*GUESSES & FORECASTS OF THE YEARS AHEAD*

*BY*

H. G. Wells

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FIRST EDITION

# NOTE

THESE articles were written for great weekly newspapers upon both sides of the Atlantic, and I note rather than complain that they appeared after suffering a certain amount of mutilation. I expressed my disapproval of such changes as were made, as vividly as possible, but the remedies a writer has are uncertain and tedious and the editorial interference went on to the end. The paragraphs were cut to pieces; there was a brightly careless excision of phrases and sentences apparently done at the eleventh hour to fit space and there was a frequent insertion of uncongenial cross-heads and headings more satisfactory to the editorial mind. The article in which I replied to the repeated personal attacks of Lord Birkenhead and his son suffered exceptionally in the London version. America with ampler columns was more respectful to the general text, but made one magnificent cut of the whole article about Sacco and Vanzetti, paid for it without complaint and did not print a line of it.

I make this note in justice to myself rather than as an indictment of these big newspapers. It is a considerable stimulus to address one's ideas to their Sunday morning audience, and it is amusing to try saying

what one has to say in as editor-proof a form as possible. It is like shouting across an intervener at a crowd. I would be the last person in the world to object to the criticism that there is a distinct flavour of shouting and a disposition to reiterate in this book. Mercifully, I have removed the emphatic cross-heads in restoring my original text. Quips and quirks, fine phrases and fine qualifications, and, above all, suggestions and hints, one flings into such work to please oneself, praying God that the printer and sub-editor will at least in their final crisis of adjustment cut out rather than distort. And when all its defects have been discounted, this syndicated newspaper work still gives a handsome opportunity for saying things broadly and plainly, and obliges one, very wholesomely, to state one's current state of mind about this, that, and the other thing in simple lucid terms. One has the sense of committing oneself to readers who may never have heard of one before, and who may, for example, base a life's antipathy on a single rash assertion.

Inserted among these papers is a lecture given in Paris in 1927 called "Democracy Under Revision." If I may so far assist the reader, I would point out that this is much more closely written than the rest of this book. It is natural to weigh one's *p*s and *q*s when one faces the ordeal of presently reading it all aloud to an exceptionally intelligent audience. This lecture is something more than an essay upon meth-

ods of government. It is an essay upon social structure. It carries in it the statement of a general principle of artistic criticism and has various sentences capable of considerable expansion. As nearly everything else in the book is in a state of quite generous expansion this lecture may be stepped over unawares. But I will be glad to find what I have to say therein about the modern novel and the modern play, for instance, not altogether disregarded. And anyhow, I would like to underline the title to the extent of remarking that the revision of democracy is not its repudiation.

H. G. Wells

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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# The Way the World Is Going

## I

### MAN BECOMES A DIFFERENT ANIMAL. DELUSIONS ABOUT HUMAN FIXITY

Of all the time-honoured fatuities that men repeat and repeat, and comfort themselves mysteriously by repeating, none surely are more patently absurd than those which assert the unchangeableness of human life. "Human nature" never alters, we are assured; man in the Stone Age, any Stone Age, was exactly what he is now, or rather more so; he felt the same things; he imagined the same things; he travelled the same round; his fears, his hopes were identical. Save for a few superficialities, human life has always been the same and will always be the same, and neither the past nor the future can be allowed to cast a reflection by difference upon our satisfaction with the lives we lead to-day. Life as we know it is, in fact, the cream and the whole of existence. There was nothing very different behind us and there is nothing better ahead.

Quite similarly we protect our self-esteem by the persuasion that life under all sorts of circumstances and in all social positions is very much of a muchness.

It gratifies our inherent grudgingness to think that life in a palace differs in no essential quality from life in our own cottage, that all the grapes above our heads are sour, and it eases our social conscience to reflect over the fire in the evening that the miner cramped in his seam or the out-of-work on tramp is so attuned to his level of existence that for all practical purposes he has just as much fun and contentment in life as we do. There is no real inequality, we assure ourselves, just as there is no progress. Our lives are as good as any lives can be. "Riches," we all say, "cannot buy happiness," and it seems hardly to touch that statement that there are hundreds of thousands of people in the completest enjoyment of existence who would be cripples or dead if they had not been able to command the services of expensive surgeons, undergo costly treatments or take imperative holidays at this or that crisis in their careers. In any other age, under any available conditions, they would be cripples or dead. But it makes us happier to deny that, just as it makes us happier to think that the life of our times will always be regarded with respect by posterity. Our heroes will always be the most heroic of heroes; the great men we have made our symbols will shine as stars of the first magnitude for ever; the art, the literature that delight us will last for "all time." Our Newton is for ever; our Shakespeare is for ever; Alexander and Cæsar and Napoleon are for ever; it is almost as if *we* were for ever.

This sort of consolation is so natural to most of us, so near to being a necessity, that to run over a few of the facts that make it absurd can rob hardly a soul of the pleasure of it. For everyday purposes we believe what we want to believe, and if we do not want to believe the truth, we do generally contrive to dispose of it as a sort of extravaganza. In that spirit most of us contemplate the fact that human life, the tune, the quality, the elements, are changing visibly before our eyes. Human life, as a matter of fact and not as a matter of sentiment, is different from what it has ever been before, and it is rapidly becoming more different. The scope of it and the feel of it and the spirit of it change. Perhaps never in the whole history of life before the present time, has there been a living species subjected to so fiercely urgent, many-sided, and comprehensive a process of change as ours to-day None at least that has survived. Transformation or extinction have been nature's invariable alternatives. Ours is a species in an intense phase of transition.

These papers, of which this is the first, will all consider some aspect or other of this great change that is going on. In them we will release our imaginations to the truth that we are things that pass, and do not leave our like, and that the ways and experiences of our children and our children's children promise to be profoundly different from the life we lead at the present time. We will give a rest to our practical working belief in the security of things as

they are. We will take the rest and refreshment of a few glances at the longer realities.

Man has always been a changing animal. The earliest human remains of a few score thousand years ago are of creatures so different that they are now regarded as a distinct species of *Homo*. Only within twenty or thirty thousand years does man seem to have been truly man. There is a disposition in some quarters to exaggerate the resemblance of the later Stone Age men to modern types, and to minimize the changes that have occurred since the onset of civilization. What is called the Cro-Magnon race was a race of big individuals, and, as in the case of their brutish predecessors, the Neanderthalers (*Homo Neanderthalensis*), that bigness extended to the brain case—in quantity at least their brains were above our present average—but they were beings of a coarser texture than the average modern, and there has been the most preposterous nonsense written about their artistic gifts and their general intelligence. They drew and carved—about as well as recent Bushmen have drawn and carved. They were so far "modern" in their art that at times it was strikingly obscene.

A brain is known by its fruits, and the total product of this Cro-Magnon brain, of which certain excited anthropologists have made a marvel, was the precarious life of painted, wandering savages. In build and skull type and general character this Cro-Magnon people differed from any race now flourishing in this world. Industrious search may find odd in-

dividuals here and there, in Central France and the Canary Isles, for example, rather after the Cro-Magnon type. They are rarely eminent individuals.

Throughout the whole historical period the races of men have been changing. In a recent lecture Sir Arthur Keith noted some of the differences between the average Briton of to-day and his predecessor of only a few centuries ago. The former has, for instance, a "scissor bite" of the teeth instead of an edge-to-edge bite; his face is finer and longer and his palate narrower; his nose is thinner and more prominent. These are the modifications wrought upon him by the comparatively slow and slight alterations in his circumstances, extended and altered dietary, increased clothing, and the like, that went on during the Middle Ages and the subsequent two or three centuries. They are unimportant in comparison with the modifications that are being pressed upon him by the changing circumstances of to-day.

Very few of us realize the enormous distortions that are now going on in the life cycle of the human animal. There is a biological revolution in progress—of far profounder moment than any French or Russian revolution that ever happened. The facts come dripping in to us, here a paragraph in a newspaper, there a book, now a chance remark; we are busy about our personal affairs and rarely find time to sit back and consider the immense significance of the whole continuing process. We forget this before we hear of that, and do not put two and two together.

Here, to begin with, is a specimen of the kind of quiet-looking fact that gets by most of us without betraying a shadow of its enormous implications. I find it mentioned casually in "Rejuvenation," a book by Dr. Norman Haire, which I chance to be consulting upon a point I shall deal with later. It is that *since the opening of the present century* insurance statistics, presumably British—Dr. Haire does not say—show that the average length of human life within the scope of these statistics has been increased by twelve years. This, when we make the necessary inquiries, does not mean that people are living on to two-and-eighty instead of the traditional three score and ten, but that the hope of survival for every infant born in Britain has been increased in a brief quarter-century by about a third. It may expect to live four years for every three it could have hoped for if it had been born in 1900. That is the latest step in a series of changes that have been going on for a much longer period. It points forward to a time when nearly every child born into a civilized community will live to maturity. Because of late marriages and other more disputable causes, there are in every thousand individuals of a modern Atlantic population twenty or less infants of under one year, and upon that such populations can and do increase. This marks a quite novel rarity of children in the new world. To judge by Oriental cities in which medieval conditions still prevail and the tombstones in old English churches, something like fifty out of the thousand of our ances-

tral populations, before the day of our great-great-grandmothers, were infants under one year, *of which thirty or more were doomed to die* in childhood or adolescence. A lot of that thirty died in the first year; a lot of the survivors from the previous year were, at the same time, dying in their second year, and so on. Proportionately there were more ailing children in that vanished state of affairs among our populations than all the children in our community to-day. Upwards of half the human beings then alive lived what we should now regard as tragically foreshortened existences. And the rest of the population, the moiety that contrived to grow up, must have been mainly occupied in mothering, fathering, and nursing this superfluity of offspring.

As we examine the dry-looking figures of birth-rates and death-rates in the vital statistics that have become available in the past hundred years, and touch them with imaginative understanding, we begin to realize that the life of man so far, up to our own times—and of women far more so—has been almost wholly a sexual one; that—with the exception of a few priests, nuns, eccentrics, and unattractive women—the full round of life for every one who could achieve it, who wasn't killed too soon, that is, was to grow up, to pair, to produce and sustain a large family, burying most of it, and so to decay and age and die. The whole adult life was consumed by sex and its consequences; the business of the family, of making it and of toiling for it, of weeping over the

dead and beginning again, was the complete circle of life. Man was almost as sexual as a cat with its ever-recurring kittens. In the past the normal existence fell wholly into the frame of the family. Man was a family animal. Now this is no longer the case. Now family life becomes merely a phase in an ampler experience. Human life escapes beyond it.

Human life, which was formerly almost completely filled by that reproductive business, the family, has come very suddenly upon conditions under which the necessity for sexual preoccupations has enormously diminished. That means a biological revolution of quite primary quality. Women and men can no longer use themselves up, even if they would, in that immemorial round. The release of women—if we may regard it as a release and not as a deprivation—is conspicuously immense. *Homo Sapiens*, departing from the usual practice of the animal kingdom, is beginning to breed much later than his physical adolescence, to conserve all his offspring, and so to free and render available, for good or evil, an amount of individual time and energy unprecedented in the history of life. He has changed these cardinal points in his biological process in the last hundred years almost unawares. So far he is already a different sort of animal from his ancestors, or, indeed, from any species of vertebrated creature that has ever lived upon earth.

The change in conditions is all too recent to appear in any inherent quality. Adaptation to the new con-

ditions has to be individual, just as education to the old conditions had to be. If the new conditions last long enough, a specific modification facilitating adaptation will go on, as Professor Mark Baldwin showed a decade or so ago, in his far too much neglected discussion of the evolutionary process, "Development and Evolution." That will be an affair of many generations, but it will come. And no doubt it will be made evident by visible physical differences as well as physiological alterations.

But these current changes in the natural history of mankind during the last few decades, great as they are, pale before certain others that are now promising to alter the whole tenor of the life experience in quite another direction. A series of possibilities and practicabilities are being opened to us by recent research that amount in effect to a huge artificial extension of the fully adult stage of life. *Homo Sapiens* in the past was a creature who normally went to work at the end of childhood, became adult, married, had a large, distressful, onerous family, lost his teeth, lost the power of accommodating his eyes to distance, and came to an end. It is within quite a short period that man has eked out his failing powers with glasses and false teeth. "Nature," says Sir Arthur Keith, "has worked out the evolution of the human family on a mean life tenure of forty-five years; she has hitherto run the human army on a short service system." In the near future, on the contrary, man will not work until he is adult; he will marry much later; he will have a small,

successful family; he will then go on for some score of years, it may be, before he exhibits any of the characteristic decadence of age. Instead of breaking down and being left by the way, the oculist, the dentist, the surgeon, will perform the necessary roadside repairs, and carry him on through a prolongation of his efficiency. But that is not all; something more than patching and carrying on is possible; his essential vitality can be, and will be, prolonged.

The researches on which our belief in the last and most hopeful of these possibilities is based—that is, the suspension of senility—are recent; the great bulk of them have been published since this century began, but they amount now to a substantial mass of entirely confirmatory evidence. Metchnikoff was one of the earliest to make the attack upon senile decay, and his dietetic suggestions and his schemes for a sort of hygienic evisceration have not proved of any great value, but since his time an increasing number of investigators, working chiefly upon the internal secretions of the animal body, have shown more and more convincingly that by simple and easy treatment it is possible to sustain a human being in a state of adult vigour far beyond Shakespeare's sixth and seventh ages. Haire gives the results of a score of able workers in Germany, Britain, America, and other countries, Steinach, Lichtenstern, Voronoff, and their pupils, associates, and rivals, who have gradually built up certainties out of speculations and experiments. In the last month or so Professor Ca-

vazzi, of Bologna, has published claims that greatly reinforce and extend these assurances. Adult vigour *can* be restored, and it can be kept up to at least the end of the normal life. It can probably be maintained for many years beyond that limit. At first it may be only a few prosperous and enterprising individuals, with access to the best and most skilful advice, who will extend the span of their activity in this way, but it is unlikely that "prolongation" will be allowed to remain the privilege of a small class. The average active human life, we may conclude, in the quite near future, will be not only unencumbered but prolonged, in comparison with any but exceptionally sturdy and lucky lives in the past.

We seem to be passing on now towards a state of human society in which there will be no children but hopeful and active children, and though many people will be full of years, none will be "aged"; a state of society, in fact, in which the average man and woman will be of riper years, far maturer in outlook and far less deeply immersed in sexual and family affairs. It will be a community of grown-up people to an extent quite beyond our present community. In most of our forecasts and imaginings of times to come, we are apt to disregard this biological revolution which is in progress, and the mental and social consequences that must follow upon it. It seems to indicate the possibility of a world with a different and probably a graver emotional tone, with an art and a literature much less obsessed by the love story and the elemen-

tary adventures of life, and with a political and social life less passionate and impatient and more circumspect. It is not a metaphor, it is a statement of material fact that mankind is growing up, and that we are passing towards a more distinctly adult life as the main stretch of existence, in comparison with the feverishly youthful and transitory life of the past.

The development of the speculations that arise out of this statement would carry us far beyond the scope of the present article. Later I hope to return to some of the most striking of them. But the great mass of current discussion about moral codes and standards of conduct, about the ethics and sentiment of married and business and religious life and the like, this searching and probing into fundamental things which make our contemporary literature and journalism so different from that of the last century, arises, I believe, very largely out of a need, felt rather than recognized, of altering and adjusting our working habits and traditional methods to this very imperfectly apprehended change in human biology, this shifting of the centre point of life from the twenties up towards the fifties, this rapid and disconcerting change, in the course of a generation or so, of *Homo Sapiens* into a more completely developed, longer living, and more persistently vital animal.

*9 January, 1927.*

## II

### WHAT IS HAPPENING IN CHINA? DOES THE KUOMINTANG FORESHADOW A NEW SORT OF GOVERNMENT IN THE WORLD?

WHERE is history being made most abundantly at the present time?

One may doubt whether any of the events of the last twelve months either in America or in Europe will figure very conspicuously in the histories of the future. Political futilities and a slow economic contraction in Great Britain, phases in the process of superabundance in America, government by rhetoric and outrage in Italy, the sluggish recognition at Geneva that Germany is after all in the middle of Europe, and the arrest of the franc at the very moment when its plunge seemed definitive—these and the steady progressive reconstruction of a modern-spirited trading and manufacturing life upon the wide foundations of Russia, mark no turning point in the course of human affairs. All these things are, so to speak, merely Fate carrying-on. But when we look to China there seems to be something more than carrying-on in progress. There seems to be something new there, something which has at any

rate, so far as the Western observer is concerned, only become credible and important in the last eight or ten months. It is a change in the rhythm. It is the clear onset of a new phase, of a new China, like nothing the world has ever seen before, a challenge, a promise to all mankind.

Let us try to realize in the most general terms the significance of this new movement in China. It is not an easy thing to do. Our world is densely ignorant of things Chinese. At school few of us learnt anything of the slightest importance about China, except that it had a population so immense that you could kill Chinamen by the hundred and they scarcely noticed it, that they ate rice, rats, and puppies, and that they possessed two long rivers that seriously challenged the records of the Nile and the Mississippi.

We learnt less formally that Chinamen of all ages wore highly decorative skirts and flew kites, whereas we knew perfectly well that the only proper amusement for gentlemen is hitting expensive little balls about golf links until they are lost, and that the only proper wear for a dominant race is chromatic pull-overs and highly-illuminated plus fours. Moreover, we were given to understand that the Chinese of all ages and sexes preferred work to any other form of enjoyment, and found an almost infantile pleasure in living exactly on the margin of subsistence. And they were cruel, very cruel. Their artistic productions amused us very greatly; they were so unlike the great masters, Victorian art and British Academy pictures.

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Of beauty in the proper sense of the word they knew nothing. So furnished forth upon this matter of China, our minds rested and were content.

Right up to the present time we have been as satisfied with the pre-eminence of our civilization and the worthlessness of theirs as were the Chinese about their own perfections a hundred years ago. But since then the Chinese have suffered blow after blow and humiliation after humiliation, until the need of learning has been forced upon them. Students came from China to America and Europe, and come in increasing numbers. Never a Western student, except for some eccentric, goes to China. Traders go, the European Governments send battleships to back up their traders, and missionaries are despatched by various denominations to advise the Chinese of the chief sorts of salvation practised among us and available for their use. The traders send back news with an eye to their privileges, and the missionaries with an eye to their paymasters. A bright young man of position at Oxford or Harvard would as soon think of leaving his ball games and his "rags" and all the pleasant procedure that leads to pre-eminence as lawyer and legislator in our world, for two or three years of study in China, as get into a shell and be shot off to the moon. So that the Chinese may even have crept ahead of us in breadth of outlook during the past few years. Many of them now seem to know most of what we know and to know also quite a lot about their own country. If one wants to know

about China nowadays, it is best to ask a Chinaman.

And now with a sense of surprise we find ourselves confronted by a modern self-conscious Chinese nationality, consolidating its power very rapidly and demanding to speak on equal terms with the American and European. A living Chinese nation has appeared in the world.

Perhaps the most striking thing about the present Chinese situation is this, that it is not apparently the work of any single man; the consolidation and reconstruction of China that has made such rapid progress in the last twelve months has not gone on under the direction of some strong-jowled hero of the Diaz or Mussolini type. When the long-tottering Manchu dynasty fell, and China became a republic and fell into all the violent diversions and dissensions inevitable after so extreme a change of régime, we Westerners, with our antiquated ideas, looked at once for the strong man who was either to foist a new dynasty on China or restore and bolster up the old—just as we looked for a Napoleon to emerge in Russia. That marked how far the Western intelligence had got in these matters. And just as the Western Powers of Europe, following out dreary foreign policies they ought to have scrapped ten years ago, muckered away an enormous amount of war gear and money in supporting crazy "white hopes" against the nascent new thing in Russia, ugly and queer and incomprehensible to them, so they have wasted their prestige and resources upon this or that Chinese brigand and general

who was to play the rôle of Diaz in Mexico and make China safe for the European investor.

No such "hero" has emerged either in Russia or China. It marks a new age. The days of great adventurers seem to be past in any country larger than Italy, and even in Italy it is possible to regard Mussolini less as a leader than as the rather animated effigy of a juvenile insurrection. What has happened in these wider, greater lands is something much more remarkable, something new in history, a phenomenon that calls for our most strenuous attention—namely, government, effective government, competent military control, and a consistent, steady, successful policy by an organized association. This Kuomintang in China in so far as it is an organized association is curiously parallel to the Communist Party which, standing behind the quasi-parliamentary Soviets, has now held Russia together, restrained such dangerous adventurers as Zinovieff, and defended its frontiers against incessant foreign aggression for nine long years. We shall be extraordinarily foolish if we do not attempt to realize the significance of this novel method of controlling government which has broken out over two of the greatest political areas of the globe. We have now two governments through organized associations, governments which are neither limited monarchies, dictatorships, nor parliamentary republics, on the American and French models—one in Russia, and now another over the larger half of China, which bid fair to spread over the entire

breadth of Asia until they are in complete contact.

When I say that the Communist Party and the Kuomintang are similar, I mean only in so far as regards organization. They have profound differences in origin and aim and profession, and to those I will give a word later. But first I want to point out the complete novelty of their method.

Some twenty years or more ago I wrote a fantastic speculation about government, called "A Modern Utopia," in which I supposed all administrative and legislative functions to be monopolized by an organization called the Samurai, which any one could join by passing certain fairly exacting tests and obeying the rules of an austere, disinterested, and responsible life. One was free to leave the organization and drop power and responsibility when one chose. The organization ran the world. There were no great heroes and leaders, and there were no representatives nor parliaments nor elections. Any one who chose to face the hardships of the job could have a hand in control, but there was no room in the direction of public affairs either for the adventurer or for appeals to the oafish crowd.

Now this fantasy seems to have been one of those odd guesses that hover close to latent possibilities. If the "Modern Utopia" were published now, everybody would say I had taken a leaf from the book of the Communist Party or the Kuomintang, or even (though this is rather a different animal) the Fascisti. But indeed this anticipation sprang only from an

early recognition that modern means of communication, the power afforded by print, telephone, wireless, and so forth, of rapidly putting through directive strategic or technical conceptions to a great number of co-operating centres, of getting quick replies and effective discussion, has opened up a new world of political processes. Ideas can now be given an effectiveness greater than the effectiveness of any personality, and stronger than any sectional interest. The common design can be documented and sustained against perversion and betrayal. It can be elaborated and developed steadily and widely without personal, local, and sectional misunderstandings. So it is that both New Russia and this New China that has hatched itself out so astonishingly in the last year are things as new and different structurally from any preceding political organisms as mammals were from the great reptiles that came before them.

Directly we turn to their origins we note a wide difference. New Russia is the creation of the Communist Party, based upon and knit closely together by the economic dogmas of the Marxists. It was a cosmopolitan party with more than half a century of insurrectionary and revolutionary activity behind it before it secured power. It was a party of antagonism to the current system, it captured Russia as a war-shattered ruin, and for a time it showed itself very poor in constructive ideas and economic organization. Its habits were habits of opposition and sabotage. But from the outset it had immense political resist-

ance and strength, and it persists and learns, and is now manifestly building up a new social and economic order tentatively and experimentally, that is neither communistic nor individualistic on Western lines. The Kuomintang seems to owe its origins and inspirations to that valiant man, Dr. Sun Yat Sen, who so nearly escaped decapitation in the Chinese Legation in London a quarter of a century ago. Its vital element is the student class, and especially the students fired by Western ideas but by no means overwhelmed by them. It has come more rapidly to power against suppression. Its centre of origin is Canton; it is the creation of the South. Perhaps it was inevitable that the New China should arise far away from the ancient imperial traditions of Peking, far away from the foreign legations and the military memories of the North. And while the Russian movement was primarily social and only secondarily Russian, the Kuomintang started apparently with the idea of "China for the Chinese" and accepted most of the established traditions of property.

We remain, I say, still largely ignorant of the true quality of the Kuomintang. Three-quarters of the information we get from China is untrustworthy on account of its commercial or antiquated bias. Obviously the Chinese want to secure a free hand in the control of their own political and economic life, to levy tariffs according to their needs, and extinguish the injustice of extra-territorial rights, and as obviously these simple and reasonable aspirations are

deeply resented by the inadaptable Europeans who have lived in and profited by the old régime. But in spite of the manifest eagerness of a large section of the Western press to make capital out of any outrage upon Europeans in South China, they have had very little to record, and on the other hand the tale of European violence against the Chinese is a heavy one. The "fool behind the gun" who has been so busy in recent years shooting away the links of confidence and good feeling that hold together the British Empire in Ireland, in India, and elsewhere, seems to have had a glorious time out of bounds in China. He has blazed away at unarmed processions of students and shot into crowded towns. The English illustrated papers have offered us the most damning evidence of obstructive junks rammed and sunken and of the general high-handedness of British procedure. Since the Bolshevik Government is still a useful bogey for American and European scaremongers, the Kuomintang is declared to be Bolshevist in origin and sympathy. This is just the common abuse natural in the situation. The Kuomintang seems to be unencumbered by the Marxist dogmas that still clog the feet of Russian development. It is probably a decade or so more modern and flexible in its ideas.

Our illustrated papers have published photographs of Kuomintang leaders grouped with Borodin and other Bolshevist representatives in support of the "Red" accusation. But that no more commits China and Russia to a hand-and-glove alliance than the

photographs in circulation of the poor little Manchu emperor boy with a British "tutor" standing like a keeper beside him commit Great Britain to a restoration of the Son of Heaven's sacrifices in Pekin. There seem to be far more Russians with the brigand generals of North China than among the Cantonese armies, but these Pekin Russians are Russians of the "white" persuasion and useless for the purpose of creating prejudice. I do not hear of any attempts on the part of the Cantonese Government to expropriate any one, Chinese or foreigner, or to restrain trading, or to confiscate or nationalize industry. If anything of the sort did occur, we should certainly have all the reactionary European press proclaiming it, and so it seems reasonable to conclude that there is no tendency whatever in that direction. The social and economic life of China has never run strictly parallel to ours, and the Kuomintang develops in its own way —but that is a different story from the establishment of Communism.

And also it is a different story if, under similar necessities, the new social trading and industrial experiments of the Chinese presently come to display some sort of similarity to Russian developments, as the dogmas of the Marxists are shaken off or sterilized as pious sentiments by the latter people, and as both races settle down to work in the face of realities. Surely no man in his senses can believe that the financial, trading, and industrial methods of America and Europe to-day are the ultimate triumph of human

wisdom, and it is as probable that successful innovations of system may spring from the desolated and renascent economic life of Russia and China as amidst the jungle of interests in our more prosperous but more encumbered world.

The disposition to call the Cantonese Government "red" and to force it into association with the Russian Government, which seems to be the aim of a large section of the Atlantic press, may prove a very dangerous disposition to our Western civilization. Manifestly China is not so afraid of Russia as she is of Japan and the Powers whose warships pervade her great rivers. Soviet Russia is further off and milder. And anxious to be helpful.

But the rubbish that is written in some papers does not always perish there. It goes to China; it goes to Russia. Suppose we Westerners succeed in persuading the Chinese and the Russians that we regard them with a common animosity, and that for us they are all one—Reds altogether. Suppose we insist on treating them both as outcasts. Suppose that as the United Soviets and the Kuomintang work out the problems of economic and political construction before them, they find they have problems very much in common, and that the irrational hostility of the older civilizations obliges them to turn more and more to each other. Suppose they take up scientific work more vigorously than our fatuous self-satisfaction allows us to do. Suppose they decide to make the pace for us. Europe and America are not so blindingly brilliant

and progressive that it would not be possible to press them hard.

Suppose Russia and China chose to put in tens of thousands of scientific workers against our thousands. The average Chinese brain is said to be rather richer in grey matter than the average European. From the Baltic to the Chinese coasts there is a population of more than five hundred millions even now, and lands of a richness far surpassing all the resources of North America. They are poor countries as yet, but potentially they are very great countries. They have still to develop effective railway links, but they can do that now with all the lessons of our older system to warn and guide them. And no other countries in the world are so happily placed for the promotion of aviation services. It would not be difficult to argue that the backbone lines of the air services of the future must pass over Russia and China anyhow. Before we dismiss as incredible the development of a powerful and even dominating civilization in the federated Soviets of Russia and Asia, let us recall the contemptuous superiority with which Europe regarded the United States during the strain of the Civil War.

At any rate it seems to me that this New China, whose brain and nervous system is the Kuomintang, is the most interesting thing by far upon the stage of current events, and the best worth watching and studying.

*23 January, 1927.*

## III

### WHAT IS FASCISM? WHITHER IS IT TAKING ITALY?

Is FASCISM the invention and weapon of Mussolini, or is Mussolini the creature of Fascism? Is Fascism something that would die if he died, or is it something that would have played its part in the world if that eminently theatrical figure had never been born?

No doubt that under its present name and as an organization Fascism from its very beginning has been most intimately associated with Mussolini. But though it has kept its name and its leader, it has changed its nature very completely since its appearance seven years ago. Beginning as something of a novelty, it has abandoned every novel pretension it ever made. This reality that has now taken on the name and organization of Fascism was fully vocal in Italy before the war, and its spiritual father is d'Annunzio. It was active and armed for the Fiume raid, while Mussolini was still encouraging crowds to loot shops and preaching "the railways for the railwaymen" and the land for the peasants.

This spirit in Italy, which Mussolini did not create but which he has studied, adopted, and used to clamber to his present fantastic position of Italian tyrant, had already found literary expression in the

"Futurist" poetry of Marinetti as early as 1912 and 1913. I can remember that rich voice in London at some dinner of the Poetry Society long before the war, reciting, shouting, the intimations of a new violence, of an Italy that would stand no nonsense, that adjured the past and claimed the future, that exulted in the thought and tumult of war, that was aristocratic, intolerant, proud, pitiless, and, above all, "Futurist."

In those days Mussolini was just the sort of fellow the present-time Fascist would spend a happy evening in waylaying and beating to death. He was a pacificist, a Socialist of the extreme left, and he had made himself conspicuous by leading an agrarian revolt, the Red Week, in Romagna.

Even in 1919 Mussolini had not found the real soul and substance of his party, and the youthful violence of Italy had still to discover its organizer and god. The early Fascist programme read over again now, seven years later, is almost incredibly contradictory of all that Fascism now proclaims; it was republican, pacificist, it demanded the abolition of titles, freedom of the Press, freedom of association, freedom of propaganda, a census of wealth, confiscation of unproductive capital, suppression of banks and stock exchanges, grants of land to peasant soviets, and so forth. It was in fact a new organization of Socialist extremists outside the trade-union and peasant classes. But its strength lay not in its ideas, but in the ability with which it was organized.

It set about its work from the beginning with a melodramatic picturesqueness that seized upon adolescent imaginations; it was aggressive, adventurous, quarrelsome, and implacable after the heart of youth. It was, in a word, a great lark. But it put the rampant Italian Futurists into a uniform and taught them a Roman salute. It developed a feud with the Socialists and Populist Party. It grasped an immense opportunity at the municipal elections of 1920, when it supported, and in return had the connivance of, the Giolitti Ministry. It supplied convenient bands of young roughs to intimidate electors. It got arms in some secret but effective fashion, and a properly instructed police dealt with it in a spirit of friendly laxity. And when next year it had become an actual party represented in the Chamber, it turned against its foster-father Giolitti, which served that venerable statesman right.

The early programme had dropped out of sight by that time; it would be forgotten altogether were it not for the obstinate memories of antagonists like Sturzo and Nitti—and Mussolini was feeling his way steadily towards the poses and professions that would most fully satisfy the cravings of the more energetic and adventurous sections of Italian youth. He has emerged at last in a rôle that d'Annunzio could have written for him fifteen years ago, the rôle of the unscrupulous, magnificent Saviour and re-Maker of a Hairy Heroic Italy.

As late as 1919 he had still been flirting with ex-

treme Socialistic ideas; it was only with the fall of Giolitti that he moved definitely over to patriotism, nationalism, religious orthodoxy, and conservatism. I would not charge him with a cunning and calculated self-seeking in this change of front. He seems to have been guided by the quick instinct of the born actor and demagogue for what would "take," rather than by any intelligible reasoning, to throw himself and all his resources into the forms demanded by romantic reaction.

The forces of romantic reaction had been incapable of producing an organization, but they were prepared for melodramatic devotion; they had no great leader except an elderly poet of literary habits, unhappily lacking in hair and a little exhausted by aviation and Fiume, and they cried out for a hero in the full vigour of life. The Fascist organization, with the very little modification needed to scrap all the original principles, gave them the first, and Mussolini was only too ready to take his cue and come forward into the limelight as the second.

One need only study a few of the innumerable photographs of Mussolini with which the world is now bespattered to realize that he is a resultant and no original. That round, forcible-feeble face is the popular actor's face in perfection. It stares, usually out of some pseudo-heroic costume, under a helmet for choice, with eyes devoid of thought or intelligence and an expression of vacuous challenge. "Well, what have you got against me? I deny it."

It is the face of a man monstrously vain and—at the mere first rustle of a hiss—afraid. Not physically afraid, not afraid of the assassin who lurks in the shadows, but afraid, in deadly fear of that truth which walks by day. The murders and outrages against opponents and critics that lie like a trail of blood upon his record are the natural concomitants of leadership by a man too afraid of self-realization to endure the face of an antagonist. Away with them! Nitti, Amendola, Forni, Misuri, Matteotti, Salvemini, Sturzo, Turati! Away with all these men who watch and criticize and wait! What are they waiting for? Not one of these names of men robbed, beaten, exiled, or foully done to death, which is not the name of a better man than this posturing figure which holds the stage in Italy. And the supreme sin of each one of them has been the quack-destroying comment, the chill and penetrating eye.

In truth Mussolini has made nothing in Italy. He is a product of Italy. A morbid product. Italians ask: "What should we have done without Mussolini?" and the answer is: "You would have got another." What is now drilled and disciplined as Fascism existed before him and will go on after him. If he were to die, Fascism would not have the least difficulty in finding among the rich resources of Italy a successor as dramatic and rhetorical: its difficulty would be that it would probably find too many successors.

What then is this reality of Fascism, which inflates this strange being and allows him for a little while to

do so much violence as the tyrant of Italy? What complex of forces sustains him?

One power of Fascism is that it is the first entrance of an organized brotherhood upon the drama of Italian politics.

It is only apparently a one-man tyranny. There is considerable reason to suppose that organized brotherhoods, maintaining a certain uniformity of thought and action over large areas and exacting a quasi-religious devotion within their membership, are going to play an increasingly important part in human affairs. Secret societies there have always been in Italy, but Fascism is not a secret society; it is an association with open and declared aims. It discusses its activities in big meetings and regulates them through a Press. The Communist Party which dominates Russia and the Kuomintang which is rescuing China from anarchy and foreign dominion, are other such associations, broader and more completely modern in spirit but structurally akin. Their ideals and those of the Fascists are in the flattest contrast, and their procedure is freer from furtive violence, but they have much the same material form. The contents of the vehicle differ, but the form of the vehicle is similar.

And while in the Communist Party we find Marxist theories struggling with practical reality and in the Kuomintang the conception of consolidating and developing a modernized but essentially Chinese Civilization, in the Fascist vehicle there seems to be the

ideology of a young and essentially ill-educated Italian, romantic, impatient, and, at bottom, conventional, wanting altogether in any such freshness or vigour of outlook as distinguishes the Kuomintang and Communist visions. Fascism as compared with these movements presents a mentality which cannot conceive new things, but which wants old things and itself made glorious. The Italian Futurism it succeeds was never more than a projected return to primitive violence. It is a modern method without a modern idea.

This Fascist mind demands workers who work with pride and passion and accept what is given to them cheerfully; soldiers eager for the prospect of death; priests who are saints without question, and teachers who teach but one lesson: Italy. It can face no doubts nor qualifications. It sees taking thought in the light of treason, discussion as weakness, and the plainest warnings of danger as antagonism to be beaten into silence and altogether overcome. So long as Mussolini sings its song it will lavish upon him a medieval loyalty. Should he by some miracle be smitten with intelligence and self-criticism, it would sweep him away. Its honesty, as a movement in general and disregarding the manifest cynicism and commercialism of some of its older leaders, is indisputable. Mussolini before the camera man as hero is the caricature portrait of Young Italy before the world as hero.

Now, how comes it that Italy has produced this

sort of youthful mind in sufficient abundance to fill the ranks of Fascism and make it for a time at least a great and powerful machine? Why has Italy bred her own servitude and degradation? To answer that question completely would demand a long and intimately critical study of the development of Italian secondary and higher education, and of the quality and supply of reading matter to the inquiring adolescent during the past half-century. I do not even know if it is a case of bad schools or of insufficient schools, of inaccessibility of education, of religious or anti-religious tests for the teachers, of aloofness or cheapness of quality in the universities, of a pervasion of teaching by propaganda or a defective distribution of books. But bad education there has surely been, and Italy reaps the consequences to-day. The Italian intelligence is naturally one of the best in Europe, but in some way or in several ways it must have been underfed, under-exercised, and misdirected for this supply of generous, foolish, violent young men of the middle classes to exist. This mentality could not be possible without a wide ignorance of general history and world geography, without the want of any soundly scientific teaching to balance the judgment and of any effective training in discussion, fair play, and open-mindedness to steady behaviour. It is the mentality of the emotional, imaginative, intellectually undertrained hobbledehoy.

For the most tragic thing of all, to my mind, in this Italian situation is the good there is in these Fascists.

There is something brave and well-meaning about them. They love something, even if it is a phantom Italy, that never was and never can be; they can follow a leader with devotion even if he is a self-deceiving charlatan. They will work. Even their outrages have the excuse of a certain indignation, albeit stupid sometimes to the pitch of extreme cruelty. Mixed up with this goodness there is no doubt much sheer evil, a puerile malignity and the blood-lust of excited beasts, as when so hideously they beat to death and out of recognition the poor child who may or may not have fired an ineffective pistol at their dictator. But the goodness is there.

Yet I do not see that the alloy of generosity and courage in Fascism is likely to save Italy from some very evil consequences of its rule.

The deadliest thing about Fascism is its systematic and ingenious and complete destruction of all criticism and critical opposition. It is leaving no alternative Government in the land. It is destroying all hopes of recovery. The King may some day be disinterred, the Vatican may become audible again, the Populist Party of Catholic Socialism hangs on; but it is hard to imagine any of these three vestiges of the earlier state of affairs recovering enough vitality to reconstruct anew an exhausted Italy. Fascism is holding up the whole apparatus of education in Italy, killing or driving out of the country every capable thinker, clearing out the last nests of independent expression in the universities. Meanwhile its militant gestures

alarm and estrange every foreign Power with which it is in contact. Now through the Tyrol it insults the Germans to the limits of endurance; now it threatens France monstrously and recklessly; now comes the turn of the Turk or the Yugo-Slav.

Yet no European country is less capable of carrying on a modern war than Italy; she has neither the coal, steel, nor chemical industries necessary, and equally is she incapable of developing a modern industrialism without external resources. Her population increases unchecked; no birth-control propaganda may exist within her boundaries. So beneath all the blare and bluster of this apparently renascent Italy there accumulates a congestion of under-educated and what will soon be underfed millions. British and other foreign capital may for a time bring in fuel and raw material to sweat the virtues of this accumulation of cheap low-grade labour. We may hear for a time quite a lot about the industrial expansion of Italy. We may be invited to invest in Italian "industrials." But one may doubt whether the more intelligent workers of Western and Central Europe will consent to have the standards of European life lowered by Italian cheap labour without a considerable and probably an effective protest.

So it seems to me that the horoscope of Italy reads something after this fashion: this romantic, magnificent, patriotic Fascist Party, so exalted and devoted in its professions, will continue to grip the land, but of necessity it must become more and more the servant

of foreign and domestic capital, and more and more must it sell itself to reduce its dear and beloved Italy to a congested country of sweated workers and terrorized peasants, until at last the peninsula will be plainly the industrial slum of Europe. I do not see any forces in Italy capable of arresting the drive to degradation and catastrophe that the Fascist movement, for all its swagger, has set going. Italy is now the Sick Land of Europe, a fever patient, flushed with a hectic resemblance to health, and still capable of convulsive but not of sustained violence. She declines. She has fallen out of the general circle of European development; she is no longer a factor in progressive civilization. In the attempts to consolidate European affairs that will be going on in the next decade, Italy will be watched rather than consulted. She has murdered or exiled all her Europeans.

Many things may happen ultimately to this sick and sweated Italy, so deeply injured and weakened by her own misguided youth. Her present flushed cheeks and bright eyes and high temperature will presently cease to deceive even herself. She may blunder into a disastrous war, or she may develop sufficient social misery to produce a chaotic social revolution. Or one of these things may follow the other. And either war or revolution may spread its effects wide and far. In that way Italy becomes a danger to all humanity. But as a conscious participant she ceases to be great and significant in the world drama. She is now, for other countries, merely

Mussolini. She may presently be his distracted relict.

But Italy is something more than a huge river valley and a mountainous peninsula under a Fascist tyrant. Italian intelligence and energy are now scattered throughout the earth. Who can measure the science and stimulation we in the rest of the world may not owe presently to the fine minds, the liberal spirits, who have been driven out of Italy by the Fascists' loaded cane? How many men must there be to-day, once pious sons of Italy, who are now learning to be servants of mankind!

*9 February, 1927.*

## IV

### DOUBTS OF DEMOCRACY. NEW EXPERIMENTS IN GOVERNMENT

Is DEMOCRACY a failure? Is it going to be retained much as it is in the years to come, or is it to be changed almost out of recognition, or cast aside as a hopelessly bad method in human affairs?

Democracy is a word with a remarkable variety of meanings. Here I am using it in its commonest current sense to express government by legislators and administrators appointed by a popular vote, government based on the assumption that ultimately the "people" is sovereign. It involves a denial of all hereditary or class or professional claims to power and privilege except in so far as the sovereign people consents and permits. Even a king is understood to be king by popular consent and not by any right divine. Democracy's ceremonial, its feast, its great function, is the election. Thereby power is assigned, and public issues are understood to be decided.

Unless Democracy is thus defined, its meaning will flap away into the wildest contradictions. Leaving out of consideration the very especial and definite meaning it had in the ancient world, it has carried a

hundred different sets of implications since the mighty shock of the first French Revolution brought it into free and frequent use. It has stood for human equality against every form of privilege and control, and it has stood for the right of the individual to realize himself to the full against every form of restrictive assumption.

It has stood, therefore, for the extremest socialism and the extremest individualism. And it has stood, with an equal facility, for limitless progress and for a reaction to a peasant life, just as its liberating or its equalitarian side was brought uppermost. Europe has seen social democracy, Christian democracy, even democratic monarchy, shaking hands with every one, and showing baby to all the world. All these paradoxical variants and interpretations I put aside here, and I will not reflect for a moment upon the Democratic Party in the United States. Here I am discussing simply democracy in politics; government and the control of affairs in general by persons elected on a broad or universal franchise.

That sort of democracy is traceable, latent or overlaid, in most parts of Europe throughout history. Switzerland is an old story and democracy muttered close to the surface in seventeenth-century England and Scotland, but it was only with the American and French revolutions of the late eighteenth century that it became widely prevalent and respected. It was the creed of nineteenth-century liberalism everywhere. Throughout that age the great mother of parliaments

at Westminster bred for exportation, like an Ostend rabbit, and legislatures and responsible cabinets sprang up all round the globe from Japan to Brazil. Franchise spread like an epidemic, and has now spread until the nuns in the convents of England and the ladies in Turkish harems are voting. The coloured vote in South Africa has become a very grave question indeed. No doubt this comprehensive democratization of mankind has had many beneficial consequences; it has forced the most inattentive to a temporary attention to the world's affairs, and it has been the symbol of a new self-respect for women and other enfranchised classes, and for many subject races —but to-day the question whether it is really a permanently good way of doing our collective business is being more and more insistently pressed upon us. Is the world going on that way, or is it seeking for fresh and more satisfactory paths of development? Or, to put it concretely: will general elections and municipal elections or any sort of popular elections be of more than the slightest importance in the affairs of A.D. 2027?

There exists a great variety of indictments of political democracy, but the main, most essential one is that it has produced a special and objectionable type of ruler, the politician, with certain very definable characteristics. The primitive theory of electional democracy was that the great, good, and capable men, statesmen, leaders in affairs, would offer, or be persuaded, to stand for the suffrages of their fellow-

citizens, and would be chosen and elected for their known gifts and virtues. But the business of getting elected proved to be susceptible to considerable complication, and demanded almost from the outset something more than conspicuous public services and utility to ensure a candidate's return. No good for Cincinnatus to stay at his plough; he had to exert himself.

The would-be ruler found it incumbent to divert so much of his time from being good and great to the task of getting himself elected, and he had to bind himself in such close party relationship with others engaged upon the same task, that his individual goodness and greatness speedily became a minor consideration. His interest in what was good for his country and mankind has been, and is, entirely subordinate to what will gain and what will lose votes. Independence of mind, magnanimity and greatness of desire are positive disadvantages for him. And so we find in all the great democratic countries that the direction of affairs has passed into the hands of men who are great merely as politicians, and who are otherwise neither remarkably intelligent, creative, nor noble beings.

They are, indeed, in a great number of cases, conspicuously shifty and ambiguous, strategic, and practically ineffective. Let the reader try to name a single man of really first-class moral and intellectual quality in British, French, American, or German politics to-day. With a sort of baffled dismay we look

up to these men we have elected to make the world anew for us, and we see leaders who do not lead and representatives who, at best, impress us as acutely humiliating caricatures of the struggling soul of our race. We realize that the real working out of human destiny is going on, so far as it is going on, beside, independently of, or partially hampered by, our ostensible public life.

In America, France, and Great Britain, for example, where demoracy has had the longest run, we see that the democratic method has brought about practically the same situation. A number of politicians have secured the confidence and support of the main groups of prosperous people, who do not want the world changed to any great extent. These politicians of the right and centre form so solid, well-alimented, and effective a constellation that they are generally in power, albeit not always in an electional majority. Naturally these politicians of conservation have the support of all the great selling businesses which advertise in the Press and influence the Press. A second group of politicians appeals, with a feebler Press support, to the less comfortable masses. And while property, which demands no changes, can be of one mind politically, projected remedies for social uneasiness are various, and the discontented are a divided force. Leftism seems everywhere in a majority, for this is a very insecure and unsatisfactory world for the larger half of mankind, but nowhere is it in effective control.

Scarcely represented at all are the creative minds that would educate, reorganize, and push towards an ampler life for our race. Their purposes are difficult to understand and easy to misrepresent, and it suits the needs of the politician of the left far better to excite the voter at a disadvantage by wild promises and by stirring up class resentment—a procedure the politician of the right seeks to counter by the exacerbation of international hatred and suspicion and threats of foreign aggression. So he confuses and deflects popular anger. And a political party that represents wealth is not necessarily a party that represents stability. In a world of such swaying and uncertain values as ours to-day, much of our wealth is adventurous wealth and a heavy mass of business and financial operations are speculative operations dependent on insecurity. If the party of the right does not want things changed to any great extent, it may nevertheless find itself dominated by an active section quite eager to see them very considerably rocked about. No political party in any of the democratic countries of our contemporary world is anything but a resultant of current social and economic with traditional forces. No politician produced by the democratic methods stands for any authentic effort to order matters better. The great democratic countries of our globe are entirely without such political leading at the present time.

Now this is in a phase of the world's affairs when certain matters of tremendous practical importance

press for attention and can be handled only through the political machine. The art of war has come to such a pitch that civilization demands the establishment of war-proof relationships between State and State. No such relationships are forthcoming and there are no signs that any politician anywhere is prepared to risk votes by even seeming to impair the national independence, as such relationships must necessarily do.

The financial and economic life of mankind has become world-wide, and it is suffering a vast demoralization by the universal insecurity in monetary standards. There is no evidence anywhere of democracy's ability to tackle this difficult and urgent problem. The world needs a common money, or—what is a slightly clumsier form of the same thing—moneys firmly established in relation one to another. It can only get a practically common money through the co-operation of governments. No government on this planet displays the intellectual and moral quality to handle the matter magisterially.

Economic life, too, has ceased to be manageable through comparatively small businesses run as individual adventures. Control of staple products, systematic regulated production and distribution in the case of such commodities as coal are urgently needed. These things extend beyond national limits. The welfare of thousands of people in Italy, for example, depends upon the coal production in France and England. Oil, cotton, wheat—the mention of these

words now conjures up thoughts of world-wide operations. Democracy seems incapable of producing politicians competent to direct these big affairs. Private business alone is too chaotic and individualistic to direct them. It is powerful enough to deflect and involve democratic rulers and politicians, but it is not united nor powerful enough to achieve efficient administration nor able to free its creative and productive activities from the destructive raids of mere money-making adventurers. Economically we drift upon a rudderless ship.

Such simple truths are being recognized by a growing multitude of people, and they are felt far more widely than they are clearly recognized. The discontent with elected persons gathers and grows. No politician is any longer a hero to his fellow-countrymen. When Lord Oxford and Lord Birkenhead strike attitudes to remind the world of Gladstone and Palmerston everybody laughs. And the disposition to push aside parliamentary governments spreads daily. Russia has a pretence of representative government entirely and openly controlled by the Communist Party. The Duma, which I visited in January, 1914, and heard debating and dividing and rising to points of order about nothing in the best style, with its Speaker, Opposition, and reporters all complete, has vanished beyond recall. China, after some parliamentary beginnings in Peking, has cast them aside for that remarkable students' association, the Kuomintang. Italy, in the throes of economic crisis after the

war, scrapped and chased away her politicians and gave herself over also to a banded society. Spain has gone back upon parliamentary government. Poland and Hungary have scarcely tried the celebrated mixture before rejecting it. Greece follows on the same lines, and in the new Turkey it is criminal to be in opposition.

We came near to something of the same sort of thing in France last summer, when the rapid fall of the franc so scared the politicians out of their party manœuvres that Herriot, Briand, and Poincaré all took office together. We have the interesting spectacle in France of a country with its party politics largely in suspense. For ten nervous days of general strike it seemed as though Great Britain also might join the comity of nations weary of politicians. For two years Parliament has muddled with the vital question of coal production and done nothing: it has weathered one crisis and learnt nothing from it. The British coal industry goes on, socially and economically wasteful, in scandalous defiance of the Samuel Report and the Sankey Report, and Parliament continues to do nothing. The defeated miners are in the mental state of France in 1871.

Outside of America extraordinarily few people still believe in political democracy at all except as a makeshift to stand in the way of worse things, tyrannies, oligarchies, and the like horrors. Many of those who still believe demand extensive changes of method. A number of us do imagine that democracy might be

preserved, as a vastly different and more efficient method of government, if election by proportional representation with the single transferable vote in large constituencies returning many representatives could be substituted for the present bilateral system. Such an electrical method, associated with very much smaller parliamentary bodies, would in practice wipe out the party system, destroy the professional politicians, and hand over the decisive control of things to a body of prominent citizens—whose return would be very largely due to prominence and public confidence won by other than political activities. However, all politicians who have not already arrived at prominence hate the idea, and so, since they constitute the body of political life, there is not the slightest chance of its ever becoming, except perhaps in name and with essential mutilations, the electoral method of any modern state. It can be left out of this present discussion, therefore, and so also can projects for a special Economic Parliament of trade unionists and employers and suchlike collateral developments, or for elections by suddenly and fortuitously appointed jurymen instead of by entire constituencies. Such things can be attained only through political bodies, and though the politician of the existing type can do little or nothing with things when he has them in his hands, he is far too human to let them go out of his hands and legislate himself out of existence in favour of a different kind of ruler altogether—which is the admitted purpose of these novelties.

None of such schemes for making democracy more effective or more truly representative really touches the essential weakness of democracy, which is that the great mass of human beings are not sufficiently intelligent nor sufficiently interested to follow political issues at all. The representative body represents, for nine out of ten of its voters, a vacant mind. At an election the Sovereign People is roused to a temporary sporting interest, and votes according to panic or prejudice. It does not even vote according to its interests, because the ordinary citizen leads so narrow, limited, and purblind a life that he is unable to see—even in such matters as sound money or war—how politics may come home to him.

Every extension of the suffrage in Great Britain has brought in more masses of utterly indifferent people to vote. Half a century ago, when I was a child, the chief English newspapers gave almost verbatim reports of parliamentary debates and political speeches. Such a newspaper would not sell a hundred thousand copies to-day. Now, when every one has a vote, it is almost impossible to tell from the papers every one reads whether Parliament is in session. The more "democratic" democracy has become, the more complete has become its disregard of public affairs.

I put forward these by no means very exhilarating considerations in partial answer to the question with which this paper began. Political democracy is still apparently a going concern in America, least chas-

tened of continents, but elsewhere there seems very little go left in it. And I do not think that we begin yet to realize the significance of those new associations of which Communism and Fascism are the best known types, and the Kuomintang a less thoroughly understood example.

I find the Communist Party a very wonderful and instructive fact in my world. I want to be quite plain here in what I am writing; I have recently produced what I consider a very complete and destructive analysis of Communist dogma, and here, though it may seem egotistical, I am obliged to insist upon that fact. But a severely critical and sceptical attitude towards these doctrines in theory and action is one thing, and participation in the fear, hostility, and insane abuse with which those who hold them are treated, is quite another. Economic and social doctrine apart, I recognize very enviable and admirable qualities in the Communist Party both in Russia and in England. In Russia not one person in fifty is a member of the party; in all Great Britain I doubt if there are three thousand members. In our British way we try to believe that the Communist Party consists of unwashed and extremely bearded ruffians flourishing (God knows why they do it!) bombs. But really it is very largely composed of quite young people who give themselves to an astonishing extent to what they believe to be the social, political, and economic rebirth of the world. They are, the most of them, animated by an intense, essentially religious

passion. They toil mentally and make great sacrifices. They shape their lives to fit their faith. They study with an immense devotion what my critical conscience compels me to describe as dull, dogmatic, and misleading literature. They co-operate with one another with a remarkably willing discipline. "Religious" is the only word I know to describe their enthusiasm, and there is not a religious teacher in the world who would not gladly inoculate the youth of his congregation with the courage, spirit, and energy these Communists display—if he could get it separated from the mind and spirit of Marx. There they are, a numerically quite small organization. And they hold Russia against all comers with the acquiescence of the general population. They stand up to quite lively persecutions in most Western countries. They go to prison and even, in some Eastern countries, to death very courageously.

And if you are loth to hear so much good of the Communist Party, perhaps the Fascists are more to your taste. I have already criticized them for stupidity, brutality, cruelty, injustice, and so forth. I have no respect for their idol, Mussolini. But there, too, in bands of no very considerable multitude, is a devotion and a spirit that can give over a great country into their hands.

I want to suggest that we may be only in the opening phase of this sort of political religiosity, both on the left side and on the right side, and that in its development lies the answer to the question of what

is to come after democracy. There is an immense fund of unsatisfied seriousness in the young people of our Western communities to-day, and not only in the young. These movements of Communism and Fascism may be mere first attempts of that unsatisfied seriousness to make a new world out of our present disorders. What is called the decay of faith and the discrediting and fading of many old loyalties have not destroyed the serious type; they have merely let it loose for new experiments. These experiments seem to show already quite new possibilities of concentrated directive power. If once we get control of our present obsession about votes, we may discover that it is not necessary to convert a majority of the "electorate" before a new world begins.

*20 March, 1927.*

# V

## DEMOCRACY UNDER REVISION

*A Lecture Delivered at the Sorbonne on March 15th, 1927*

IN THE face of this audience, in the presence of so many distinguished men and women, I feel in a very apologetic state to-night.

I am not accustomed to make public addresses. I am not used to being entertained in this flattering fashion. But the invitation I received to come here was so tactfully and charmingly conveyed, and did me so much honour, that I could scarcely do otherwise than obey and come.

I come, if you will permit me to say so, less for the great compliment that your attention does me personally than because this gives me an opportunity of saluting France, the custodian of the world's artistic conscience, the exponent of intellectual freedom, the mighty mother of valiant and liberal thought for all mankind. The name of the Sorbonne is a very magical name to every intellectual worker, and I do not disguise from myself that to speak here to-night is the highest distinction that is ever likely to fall to me.

You receive me to-night as a man of letters. And as a man of letters I know I am not very easy to define. I am something of a romancer, something of a

novelist, something of a publicist. I have written essays and social speculations. I have stolen and dressed myself up in the plumage of the historian. I have written schoolbooks and a scientific handbook. For my own part, I fall back upon *Journalist* as the least misleading description of my use in the world.

But let me disabuse your minds of any idea that it is out of modesty or as a pose of modesty that I call myself a Journalist and my very miscellaneous mass of work Journalism, and that I am conceding a superiority in kind and quality, as an iron pot might concede a superiority to a porcelain vessel, to the novelist, the romancer, the social philosopher, or the political essayist. I am not doing that. I am not raising that sort of issue. I am not thinking of rank and order and precedence. What I am doing is trying to express, in as bright and hard a manner as possible, a very definite view of the value of all literary effort, all literary and artistic effort. I am trying to express, in so far as my own activities go, my sense of the temporary nature, the transitory and personal nature, of every statement made by science and philosophy and of every beauty revealed by art.

If I find any difference between my mind and the minds of most of the people I meet, it is that my perception of time is rather more detached than is usual from the dimensions of the individual life; that my mind is, as it were, a small-scale map of wide range; that I think with less detail and in longer stretches; that the race process as a whole has come home to me

with unusual vividness, and that future things and our relationship to future things have an abnormal reality for me. And consequently it is natural for me to think that the man of letters, the artist, the scientific worker, and the philosopher live first and foremost for their own time and for the times immediately following their own, and that thereafter their real value diminishes.

Tradition and educational pressure may mask this process to a certain extent, but only mask it. We belong to our own times and have significance only in relation to our own times. And this is as true of those we call "Immortals," of Homer, of Shakespeare, of Michael Angelo or Leonardo or Voltaire, in the measure of their scale, as it is of you and me who are thinking and discussing here to-night. Great or little, we work, we serve our purpose, we pass. Into the night or into the museum of antiquities at last go one and all. Art, poesy, philosophy, literature, are not permanent things. They change in their methods, their function, their essential nature. . . .

And when I say that, I do not belittle them, but glorify them. They are living processes like ourselves who breed and pass, and not dead things like crystals or cut gems to be treasured for ever in the vaults of the classical temple. All of them but the mere bric-à-brac I would sweep into one living mortality as Journalism in its widest sense. The picture, the music, the book, the research that does not arise out of actual current things—and does not bear upon what we

are doing or what we intend to do—does not in reality exist. It is a phantom. It is a pretension. It is Nothing. Science, art, literature, philosophy, all alike record Humanity's impression of the present and its attempt to adjust itself for a future. They express the thought and embody the will—the growing changing thought, the developing will—of mankind. They are not a beautiful excrescence upon human life; not mere pearls secreted by the effort and suffering of mankind; they are the very core of the life of mankind—its chief directive function.

Now, after this much of self-introduction, I will put before you certain speculations that occupy me very much. I put them before you not as something thought out and presented to you in a finished state, but as something about which I find myself greatly exercised—something that may evoke kindred operations going on in your minds also, and so interest you this evening.

I propose to launch a generalization, a generalization about the probable forms of expression prevalent now and in the immediate future—expression in political, social, literary, and artistic life. I am going to suggest that we are in the beginning of an age whose broad characteristics may be conveyed some day by calling it The Age of Democracy Under Revision. That title I have chosen by way of defining its relation to the age which has been drawing to its close under our eyes: the Age of Democracy Ascendent.

Let us begin by exploring common ground. It

would be easy to find quite a large number of intelligent and well-instructed people who would agree that the sixteenth century saw the germination, the seventeenth and the eighteenth the birth struggles, the nineteenth the rise and prevalence of something called Modern Democracy. Something not merely political, but social, and profoundly differentiating the literature and art of this time—quite as much as the political life—from those of any previous period. That Ascendency of Democracy has culminated; and like some wave that breaks upon a beach, its end follows close upon its culmination.

Now what do we mean by this word Democracy? We are apt to say that such words as Democracy and Socialism may mean anything or nothing. But the truth is, that, in spite of many variations and convolutions, both these words retain very definite meanings indeed. One might compare them to little bags given to a multitude of children to collect anything they liked from a pebble beach. In such bags, you might find at the end of the day a great variety of things; in no two bags would you find exactly the same things, and yet for all that in nearly all the bags would you find very much the same content.

I suppose we should, nearly all of us, be in agreement that what we meant by Democracy—in the modern sense—was expressed morally by the statement:

*All human beings are of equal value in the sight of God;* or legally:

*All men are equal before the law;*
or practically:
*One man's money is as good as another's.*

This implies a repudiation of caste, of inherent rank and function, of all privileges and all fixed subordinations. It is equalitarian or rebellious. And it is mildly paradoxical in the fact that, by insisting upon the importance of *all* individualities, it tends to restrain the exaltation of particular individuals, and by exalting all individuals to an equal level, it subordinates all individuals to the mass.

The democratic idea is no doubt very deeply rooted in the competitive and insurgent heart of man. It is implicit in Christianity and in Islam. But it was only in the sixteenth century, with the progressive decay of Feudalism, that it began to be effective in the literary, political, and artistic expression of mankind. If you reflect, I think you will agree that its appearance was everywhere associated with the breakdown of outworn or outpaced systems, with processes of release and liberation, and generally also with processes of disintegration. Democracy to many minds will also involve the challenging and repudiation of authority. Some Catholic Democrats may question that, but I believe I shall have the general feeling with me in accepting that relaxation also as an aspect of Democracy.

Now as Democracy became ascendent in our world, its spirit produced new forms in political life, in literature, in art, in music. Let us consider these distinctive forms.

In politics it produced government by elected representative assemblies—elected by an ever-widening constituency of voters. We have Chambers of Representatives, Parliaments, spread throughout the world, and we have seen the franchise extend until manhood, and at last womanhood, suffrage seems everywhere in sight. It is strange to us nowadays to imagine a fully organized country without a constitution, a Parliament and periodic appeals to the mass of voters to endorse an elected Government periodically replaceable. Yet six hundred years ago such a way of managing public affairs would have seemed fantastic. The Ancient World knew nothing of such devices. There were assemblies then, but not representative assemblies. The Greek democracies and Republican Rome assembled all their citizens. Even countries like France and England before the sixteenth century, which had Parliaments of a sort, did not conceive of them for a moment as governing bodies and kept the elected element in a minor position. I doubt if many of us fully realize the significance of the fact that the current political methods and assumptions of the world to-day, prevalent from China to Peru, would have been almost inconceivable even to highly intelligent human beings until twelve or fifteen generations ago.

So much for the political expression of Democracy. In literature the democratic spirit found its natural vehicle in the Novel. That too was new and distinctive. The tale, the story of adventures, mankind has

had always—most usually of kings, princes, and heroic leaders—but it was only with the ascent of Democracy that stories of characters, histories of common individual lives detached from politics, detached from any sense of social function, getting loose from any subordination or any responsibility, rose towards dominance in literature. At the very outset of the ascent of Democracy came the great master Cervantes with his "Don Quixote," scoffing at artistocracy, scoffing at privileged responsibility, mocking at the final futility of chivalrous mastery, putting his wisest words into the mouth of a clown and letting the flour mills of the common bread-eater overthrow his knight in armour. As modern Democracy rose to its climax, the novel rose to its climax. The common characteristic of almost all the great novels of the nineteenth century, and up to our own time, is that they represent great crowds of individuals who follow trades, professions, and so forth, and who have either no public function or, if they have a public function, are not so differentiated by it that it is of any serious importance to the story and the values of the novel. The crowd of individuals and its interplay have become everything. Great ideas that bind people together into any form of collective life are disregarded. Great religious ideas, great political ideas and developments are not there in any living, fermenting, debatable form—are even challenged and forbidden by the critics as having no place there. Consider Balzac, Dickens, Turgeniev, Zola, and suchlike represen-

tative giants of this closing age. You think at once of a picture of humanity like a market-place, like a fair, like the high-road to anywhere on a busy day. When political life appears, it appears just as any other sort of life. Here is a novel about elections and their humours, and here is one about peasants or fishermen. Just different scenery and costumes for the common story.

It strikes one at first as paradoxical that a period in which the exaltation of the individual has tended to make every one a voter, a fractional sovereign of the whole world, should lead in the literary expression of the time to the disappearance, so to speak, of the whole world in a crowd of people. But the paradox involves no real inconsistency. What is everybody's business is nobody's business. The literature of the period of Democracy Ascendent displays what its political developments mask only very thinly—that Modern Democracy is not a permanent form of political and social life, but a phase of immense dissolution.

I think it would be comparatively easy to call the drama of the last three centuries to confirm the evidence of the novel. With the beginning of the period under consideration the Miracle Play which gave you Everyman and related him to God and Heaven and Hell gave place to Falstaff and his jolly companions, to the jealousy of Othello and the social aspirations of Monsieur Jourdain. If we turn to painting or to music we find all over this period the same effect of release—

if you like—detachment, anyhow, from broad constructive conceptions and any sort of synthesis. There was very little detached painting in the old world. It was a part of something else. It decorated a building, it subserved a religious or political as well as a decorative purpose. If paintings were ever detachable, it was that they might be carried from a studio to an altar or a palace elsewhere. But with the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries painting became more and more liberated, said good-bye to the altar-piece and the palace, and set out upon a life of its own. Now our painters are pure anarchists. They paint what pleases them for the sake of painting. They paint with a total disregard of any collective reality, and they are extremely offended when we build our houses with insufficient accommodation for their bright irrelevant observations upon the beauty of this and that.

So, too, music has broken loose. In the old world it was relevant and generally subordinate. I can imagine nothing more astonishing to a revenant from the ancient to our present world—not even a general election!—than a visit to a large concert-hall during the performance, let us say, of Debussy's "L'Après-midi d'un Faune" or Ravel's "Septette,"—this gathering of fortuitous people with no common function, to listen to music which, apart from its beauty, has no sort of collective meaning, no social object at all.

So far I have been attempting to make a case for the assertion that a consideration of the chief forms

of human expression during the past age enables us to see in all of them Democracy as a great process of loosening of bonds and general disintegration. But that loosening and disintegration were not universal. Now I would point out that in certain fields synthesis is so necessary, so inherent, that it has put up a very successful fight against the solvent tendencies of Democracy.

In certain fields the ascent of Democracy has not meant dissolution. No doubt the whole world of modern science became possible, and could only become possible, through the immense mental releases of ascendent Democracy. But while in the realms of political, literary, and artistic expression Democracy meant fragmentation and reduction to unorganized masses, in this newer world of science the onset of Democracy was accompanied by synthesis of the most extensive sort. The development of science in the past three centuries has been diametrically different from the political, literary, and artistic development of the same period. In the preceding ages, when everything else was organized and relevant, science was a mere miscellany of disconnected facts. With the release of the human mind from authority, science began to be systematic and coherent. Release from established traditions and precedences meant in the world of politics, literature, and art, limitless freedom. In science it meant subjugation to experimental verification and the logical consistency of fact with fact. So while the broad visible history of the Age of

Democracy so far has been one of release, escape, go-as-you-please: less conspicuous in laboratories and faculties and books and classes—but in the end infinitely more significant—has been the growth of one consistent vision of reality to which all things must be referred, in which the moods of a man are made to march with chemical changes, and the structure of the smallest atom is brought into relation with the physics of the remotest star. To that release of synthetic forces I shall presently return.

Next let me point out that this period of the ascent of Democracy has by no means been a period of easy, undisputed ascent. Nor has it been merely a struggle against kings and aristocracies, privileges and advantages, ancient traditions and old authority. The proposition that any man is as important as any man has come hard against certain mental and material realities. History for the last hundred years or so has been largely the story of that collision. This assertion of human equality has come against the severest stresses at the boundaries where language meets language, and at the geographical or social frontiers of dissimilar races. There the common man, who has been willing to break down all the boundaries between himself and his superiors, discovers deep instinctive dispositions to call a halt and draw the line. His mind is invaded by an exaggerated sense of difference. He develops rivalries, suspicions, antagonisms. The Age of Democracy has also been the Age of Nationalism. Never in the whole history of mankind have national and

racial antagonisms been so acute and conscious, so massive, powerful, and dangerous, as they have become during the ascent of Democracy. And yet that is entirely inconsistent with the larger and completer aspirations of Democracy, which have insisted always that there shall be no distinctions of class or creed or race. One of the most human and interesting things to watch at the present time is the struggle of the Labour parties in the European democracies against their ingrained nationalist feelings and their belligerent patriotism. And still more edifying are the fluctuations of the Labour movement in such countries as Australia and South Africa with regard to yellow and brown immigration and the black vote.

But nationalism is not the greatest force that Modern Democracy has evoked against itself in its ascent. Far more fundamental is the synthetic drive in economic life, the enormous material pressure making for the replacement of individual and small competitive businesses by great and unifying enterprises, not merely in manufactures but in the production of such staples as coal, oil, iron and steel, cotton, food substances, and fundamental chemical products. The small man and the medium-sized business are pushed aside by highly organized and often quite scientifically organized concerns.

Here again the paradoxical aspect of Democracy reappears. These great crystallizations of business—so large as to become at last monopolies—are plainly due to the releases of Democracy, the freedom of science,

invention, experiment and enterprise, the lack of control and restriction the ascent of Democracy has involved. But just as plainly do these crystallizations run counter to the more intimate feeling of Democracy that every man is as good as every man, that every man should be his own master and live his life in his own fashion after his own heart. Essential to the life and success of these big businesses is an intricate system of specialization and subordination of functions, and great freedoms of action for the executives. Most of those engaged in working them must be simply employed persons, and there must be great inequalities of authority and initiative between one man and another. In America a sort of reconciliation between this democratic reality of economic synthesis and democratic ideals of quality has been attempted by Anti-Trust legislation, and in England there is a small but delightfully logical movement for what is called the Distributive State, which is to cut up big businesses periodically and hand the bleeding fragments back to the common man. But the main expression of this conflict between synthesis and analysis in the democratic age has been the struggle for and against Socialism. For there is scarcely any form of Socialism that does not fall within the definition of an attempt to take the general economic life out of whatever hands control it at present and hand it over to the direction either of representatives elected by the workers, or of politicians elected by the voters of the entire community. Socialism is the attempt to

democratize economic life as political life has already been democratized. And the final practical objection to Socialism, partial or general—the objection that has usually carried the argument—has always been this: that politicians and elected people are not good enough for the job.

That brings me to the great conspicuous fact of our present time, to what I may call the arrest, the pause, in the advance of political Democracy—to the fact that now, and since the war, there has been a growing distrust of and discontent with the politicians and the political methods evolved by Parliamentary Democracy.

In two great Latin countries we have seen politicians and parliamentary institutions thrust aside with no signs of popular regret. In Russia a parliamentary republic appeared and vanished like a dream and gave place to a government by an organized association of a quite unprecedented pattern, the Communist Party, making only the slightest concessions to the representative idea. In China we see another extraordinary organization, the Kuomintang, consolidating the whole country with tremendous vigour in the face of the discredited parliamentarianism of Peking. I will not discuss nor even raise other instances to enforce my argument that the magic has gone out of the method of government by general elections.

I have said enough, I think, to pose my essential question. Is the process of ascendent Democracy played out? Or is it going on upon the old lines, in

spite of these appearances? Or is it perhaps entering upon a new phase, a phase so different as practically to open a new age in the story of human experience? Are not its synthetic releases overtaking and mastering its tendency to fragmentation?

I have already betrayed, even in my title, the answer I am disposed to give to these questions, which is that Democracy is entering upon a phase of revision in which Parliaments and parliamentary bodies and political life as we know it to-day are destined to disappear. And that with the disappearance will come profound changes in all our methods of expression, indeed in all our lives.

For a number of generations the democratic process ruling the world has meant nothing but release, enfranchisement for freedom, the breaking down of controls and restraints and obstacles. There has been a world-wide detachment of individuals from codes and controls, subjugations and responsibilities, functions and duties. I suggest that this process of dissolution is at an end, and that mankind is faced—is challenged—by the need for reorganization and reorientation, political and social and intellectual, quite beyond the power of the negligent common voter and his politicians and the happy-go-lucky education and literature on which our minds are fed.

Let me state three great interrelated problems that have been facing mankind since the war, and let me remind you how futile so far have been the attempts of our modern democratic Governments and com-

munities to find solutions, to produce any hope of solutions, for these problems.

Foremost of these three in our consciousness is the problem of war. I need not, before such an audience as this, dilate upon the cruelty, the horror, the sheer destructiveness into which the war process, equipped by modern science, necessarily develops. I will not talk of air bombardment, or of poison gas and germs, nor of the practical abolition of the immunity of the non-combatant, nor of the complete economic and social disorganization that would probably ensue upon another group of wars. I take it that upon these matters you are of the same mind as myself. I take it that an enormous majority of humanity now wants no more war.

Yet consider how feeble have been the efforts of any Government since 1918 to set up more than the flimsiest paper barriers against war. The sabres still rattle in Europe. The big guns are moved from position to position. In 1910 war hung over Europe, over the world, like a cliff we knew must fall. And it fell. Here and now, are we any safer? For what were these politicians elected? Little conferences, little junketings, little demonstrations of amiability—like tying back the cliff with coloured cotton. Meanwhile the foundries go on making tanks, battleships, guns, all the world over.

And second of these three problems Modern Democracy has no power to handle is the monetary question. If anything is plain, if there is anything

upon which every one must be agreed, it is that for the proper working of contemporary civilization a stable money basis of world-wide validity is essential. Just so far as money is unstable, so far does speculation undermine and replace sound business enterprise and honest work for profit. For eight years now we have seen the exchanges of the world dance together. We have seen the effort for economic recuperation crippled and deflected by this drunkard dance of money. Each democratic Government has pursued its own policy according to its lights and apparent interests. The bankers and the financiers have performed their mysterious operations in obscurity. And nowhere, in any Democracy, has the mass of voters shown the slightest understanding of or ability to grasp the processes which threw them out of employment, made their poor savings evaporate, and snatched the necessaries of life out of their reach.

But the military obsession with its war threat and the monetary tangle are, so to speak, merely complications of the more general riddle before mankind, which is that, chiefly through changes in methods of transport and the advance of science and invention, economic life has become world-wide and a certain economic unity is being imposed willy-nilly upon the globe. A vast change of scale is happening in economic life—a vast extension of range. So that the method of the small individual manufacturer and trader, the method even of the moderate-sized competing company, the method even of national groups,

tend to be superseded, in the case of all our staple supplies, by combinations upon a universal scale. The master problem before us all, before our race, is how to achieve this world economic unity, how to produce a system of world controls with as little blind experiment as possible, without the sacrifice of countless millions of whole generations, in the throes of this inevitable reconstruction. How to establish enough political unity in the world to ensure peace; how to establish enough political unity to save industry and trade from becoming the mere preliminaries to a gamble with the exchange; how to establish enough political unity to control and direct the distribution of raw products, employment and manufactured goods about the earth—that, in brief, is the present task before the human intelligence. And we have no Governments, we have nothing in the world able to deal with this trinity of problems, this three-headed Sphinx which has waylaid and now confronts mankind.

Now the sense of the inadequacy of modern democratic Governments for the task before them grows upon us all. What is going to be attempted, what is going to be done in the matter? We are all familiar nowadays with various projects of electoral reform. Some, such as the Referendum, aim merely at restraining and paralyzing Governments. Others, such as the proposal to have smaller representative bodies of members elected by large constituencies by the methods of proportional representation by the simple

transferable vote, would no doubt give a more free and vigorous assembly, and go far to abolish political parties and the hack professional politician. But none of these electoral reform projects go to the root of the trouble with Modern Democracy, which is the indifference, ignorance, and incapacity of the common man towards public affairs.

We have to recognize more plainly than is generally admitted to-day that the ordinary voter does not care a rap for his vote. He does not connect it with the idea of the world at large, nor use it to express any will or purpose whatever about the general conduct of things. I have already called attention to the fact that the novel, the characteristic literary form of Modern Democracy, and the modern drama ignore all comprehensive political and religious ideas. Thereby they display current reality with the utmost veracity. These forms, the novel and the play, have so far embodied no new concepts and directions about life as a whole, they have simply represented life at large released from pre-existing concepts and directions. Our modern democratic Governments reveal as clearly that the onset of Modern Democracy did not mean a transfer of power from the few to the many, but a disappearance of power from the world. The vote is an instrument of defence, and not a constructive tool. Faced with gigantic constructive needs of ever-increasing urgency, political Democracy fails. It cannot produce inventive and original Governments; it cannot produce resolute Governments; it cannot

produce understanding, far-thinking Governments. Its utmost act of will is the capricious or peevish dismissal of Governments by a general election.

For a century or more it has worked well that the world should be under-governed and under-organized. In that liberty science has won its way, established itself in a world-wide system of research and record, gained an invincible inertia. Music has achieved the most glorious developments, painting risen to unprecedented levels of technique, literature learnt a new fearlessness, and industry and commerce have tried and expanded a thousand subtle and huge combinations no official control would ever have permitted. The mere break-down of the cramping systems of the past, the escape from traditional privilege and authority, was enough to permit the great expansion of life that has gone on since the sixteenth century. But there is a limit to unguided and uncontrolled expansion, and at that limit we seem to have arrived with a war threat, a monetary instability, and a chronic conflict between the organic growth of economic processes and the desire of the worker for freedom and happiness, which none of the Governments in the world seem to have the necessary initiative and vigour to meet.

We need now more definite direction and government in human affairs, on a scale and of a quality commensurate with the three mighty problems our race has to face. It is idle to talk of returning to the little royalties, aristocracies, and so forth of the pre-

democratic past. Are there any signs of a new, more decisive, and more vigorously constructive form of government in our world? I submit there are, and on these signs I rest my anticipations of the Age of Democracy Under Revision that is dawning upon us. Coming events cast their shadows before, and a keen eye can detect a number of shadows of what is coming. But the two shadows to which I would particularly draw your attention are the Communist Party and Fascism.

Let me be perfectly clear upon one point here. I am an unsparing hostile critic of Marxist Communism. I have a strong dislike for many aspects of Fascism—including particularly its head. May I insist upon that? There is a mental disease about called "Seeing red," and I want to avoid any manifestations of that to-night. I am not sympathetic with Communist ideas. In my latest book, "The World of William Clissold," you will find a most careful, elaborate, and destructive criticism of Marxism, and my treatment of Lenin has brought down upon me the violent vituperation of Mr. Trotsky. Quite as fervently have I plunged into conflict with Fascism. I am anti-Communist and anti-Fascist. But what I am discussing now is not the mental content of these two movements, but their quality and spirit as organizations.

Their quality and spirit as organizations. . . . They are both mainly composed of youngish people. They are so far democratic that they are open to any one

who will obey their disciplines and satisfy their requirements. Some of my hearers may know something of the intimate lives of young Communists or young Fascists. The movement dominates the entire life. The individual gives himself—or herself—to the movement in a spirit essentially religious. It enters into the life and into the conscience as few religions do nowadays. Communism indeed claims that it is a complete substitute for religion. Everything else is to be subordinated to the ends of the movement. With the Fascist these are the supposed good of the Italian community; with the Communist they are the supposed good of the whole world. These movements began as voluntary movements of young people, so concerned about public affairs as willingly to give themselves to the sacrifices and dangers—and adventure—involved. I submit it is a fact of profound significance that Fascism could attract enough vigorous young people to capture and hold and govern Italy, and that the Communist Party, with perhaps a hundred thousand members or so in Russia, could seize upon the ruins of that war-broken land and hold it against all comers.

One has to admit, in spite of many assertions to the contrary, that neither in Italy nor Russia do the masses of the population seem to resent the dictatorship of these associations. No vote famine has broken out in these disenfranchised countries. You do not find haggard peasants wandering about in search of a polling booth. So that our assertion that the average

common man, the common voter, does not care a rap about the commonweal and his vote, has to be supplemented by the fact that there is an active-minded minority capable of so vivid an interest in the direction of public affairs as to make the most complete sacrifices to see things going in the way it considers right. This is most conspicuous in Russia and Italy, but in China students' associations, closely similar in character, are taking possession of the larger half of the country, and in Japan and many other countries kindred bodies of mentally energetic types are playing an increasingly important rôle in public life. In the nineteenth century such types were either not stimulated to activity, or their energies were spent upon parliamentary politics or diverted in other directions. Now all over the world a certain section of them is taking its activities out of parliamentary affairs and setting itself into vigorous competition with the parliamentary system.

You see, I am building my expectation of a new phase in human affairs upon the belief that there is a profoundly serious minority in the mass of our generally indifferent species. I cannot understand the existence of any of the great religions, I cannot explain any fine and grave constructive process in history, unless there is such a serious minority amidst our confusions. They are the salt of the earth, these people capable of devotion and of living lives for remote and mighty ends—and, unless the composition of our species has altered, they are as numerous

as they have ever been. I see them less and less satisfied and used by existing loyalties and traditional faiths. I see them ready to crystallize about any constructive idea powerful enough to grip their minds. Is it not reasonable then to hold that these associations, these concentrations of mentally energetic types for political ends, these revelations of politico-religious fervour in the community—considerable as they are even now—are the mere beginnings of much greater things? The breakdown of the old loyalties and the old faiths in the past age has released this great fund of effort and synthetic possibility for new applications. And over against it we have the need for world peace—which can be achieved only by some sort of political unity—and for social adjustment, which seems only possible through the comprehensible handling of world economic affairs as one great system.

More than twenty years ago, in a book called "A Modern Utopia," when there was not a fact on earth to support me, I sketched a World State ruled by a self-devoted organization of volunteers. To-day I can recall that conception of a future society and I can appeal to Russia, China, Italy, and much that is astir everywhere, to substantiate that possibility. I have spoken of the youth in these two specimen movements I have cited, but it is not merely the young who will be found willing to orient their dispersed lives to great aims and comprehensive ideas. The pain of aimlessness and ineffectiveness can be aroused at any age with the realization of insecurity. The search for

a consuming objective ends only with life. In short, we have the morally energetic types needed for such a movement in a released and nascent state. We have the manifest need for such a movement. We are gathering the creative ideas and accumulating the impulse for such a movement. What is there to prevent a great politico-religious drive for social and world unity taking hold everywhere of the active and adventurous minority of mankind—that is to say, of all mankind that matters—even quite soon?

That is the essence of what I want to put before you to-night. That is what I mean when I say that the phase of Democracy as release has come to its end, and that we are already in the beginning of the phase of Democratic Synthesis, a great religious-spirited phase. If you choose to link it to Christianity or Islam or Buddhism or any existing democratic religion; or to Communism, that religious substitute; or call it in itself the Religion of Progress, nothing that I am saying here to-night will stand in your way. And if this diagnosis is correct, then necessarily the changing spirit of Democracy, the change from fragmentation and irrelevance to synthesis and reference to directive general ideas on a universal scale, will become apparent in all forms of human expression.

Here with the time at my disposal I can but ask: Is that so? In political life, is there any tendency among intelligent people to be dissatisfied with the passive rôle of voters and to attempt, in all sorts of ways, to exert a direct influence on common affairs?

In intellectual life, is there an increasing tendency to discuss world-wide problems—political, economic, social? Is there a marked increase of such literature? A livelier interest in such questions? If this thesis is right, the novel and the drama should be changing. They should both be bringing in great issues, a *quasi*-religious attitude to world affairs as a living part of the human story. The novel should no longer be merely a picture of a spectacle relying for its interest upon adventures and the extraordinary traits of individual characters, in no way responsible for the whole. It should be turning decisively towards responsibility, to what I might call creative propaganda. It should be permeated by the question: "What do these lives make for?" And the drama—to turn to the drama—should be no longer the well-made play grouping itself around a situation. Is such a play as Shaw's "Saint Joan," or Toller's "Masses and Men," any intimation of Synthetic Democracy upon the stage? Again, is there in painting and music any tendency to return from—what shall I say?—pure painting and pure music to breadth and profundity of reference?

Well, I ask these questions. I put these ideas before you. I have done my best to give you my impression of this new phase into which human life is passing, and my forecast of the new spirit that I believe will guide the criticism of expression in the time before us. And I thank you with all my heart for the reception and the attention you have given me.

## VI

### THE ABSURDITY OF BRITISH POLITICS: A SHADOW ON THE WHOLE WORLD. WHAT HAS TO BE DONE ABOUT IT?

I LOATHE Nationalism, and ripening experience has corroded my Imperialism (of 1899–1900) profoundly, and perhaps incurably, but this does not prevent my being intensely, affectionately, and profoundly English. But by being English I do not mean pretending mystical and impossible emotions at the first grunts of the National Anthem, or the chance sight of that curious political compromise of the last century, the Union Jack, which has swallowed up the real English flag of St. George, and still, against all reason, retains the cross of St. Patrick in its entanglement. Nor by being English do I mean repudiating the high republicanism of my English Milton, my English Cromwell, and my equally English George Washington. Nor again would I mix up the English idea with a trained aversion from foreign goods and ingenious attempts to choke the trade of other countries in favour of our home products. Indeed, I feel a little ashamed of myself when a polite and kindly foreign post office hands me out my letters stamped with blatant exhortations to "Buy British Goods." Yet

all the same I maintain that I am a scion, however unworthy, of a very great race, and heir to an unapproachable tradition of candid speech and generous act.

My people, the English, have created mighty nations, lived valiantly for freedom and fair play through many sturdy generations, and fertilized the whole world with their adventurous dead.

I hold most firmly that we English—who make up perhaps a third of the United States population and an eighth of that of the British Empire—are a people necessary to mankind, that there are certain calls and occasions when either "God's Englishman"—as our Milton had it—must play his part, or the occasion fail.

It is our boast that we say what we think without fear or favour and that we are not easily driven in flocks or cowed by difficulties or defeated—even by defeat. And believing these things, I hold it as my right and duty as a common Englishman to watch the steps of my own people wherever they are found, in Britain or America, in India or Africa or Australia, and to speak as plainly as I can when they seem to be falling away from the quality that has won us our place in history and the respect of mankind. I had rather assert my right to repudiate the shooting at Amritsar and cry "Stop!" to the justice of Massachusetts when it grows harsh and unfair to such friendless men as Sacco and Vanzetti than reap all the material successes that life can offer me. In that way

I can a little discharge the obligation I am put under when I am counted among Englishmen.

Never have we been a theatrical people; there are few heroic gestures in our story and little rhetoric; we have never pretended to be a breed of supermen, and our drama, fiction, and common speech abound in self-derision. The British common soldier breaks into literature in the persons of Falstaff and Bardolph and Nym, and the foreigner has always been given fair play and a welcome among us—up to 1917, at any rate. Our dearest boast was the prestige of "the word of an Englishman," and it is our claim that we would rather be trusted than exalted among the peoples of the earth. Whatever the diplomatic situation may have been, the great mass of the English folk in the New World, as in the Old, believed that they were fighting aggressive monarchist militarism in the Great War and preparing the way for a peace without uniforms. They hated Germany more for her goose step than for her fleet. The seed of that rather wilted but still living plant, the League of Nations, was sown by the practical liberalism of the English mind on both sides of the Atlantic, and could never have existed but for the faith of the English in reasonable dealing. The faith of our people launched that experiment, and to them alone can the world look for the mental courage to face its disappointments and accumulate and organize the resolution needed for the next thrust and experiment in the same direction.

Liberalism of thought and restrained steadfastness

in act has been the contribution of the English people to human affairs during the past two centuries. None of us claims any preposterous superiorities over other peoples; and most of us can admit inferiorities without a qualm. The French are certainly more direct and clear-headed than we are, and the Germans more thorough. We lack the animation of the Levantine and the mental richness of the Slav. We have a curiously atmospheric quality in our thought; we are not rapid with our problems, and we are apt to muddle about with perplexities and betray a lack of haste and zeal which exasperates observers. At the present time, and indeed since 1917, we have been making a bad showing. It is time we woke up to what we are not doing. A time may come when we shall discover that the world has not waited for the English.

For ten years the English—and by English I mean equally the English-speaking, English-thinking people of the United States and of the British Empire, for I cannot separate them in these matters—have on the whole been disposed towards some settlement of the world's affairs that would ensure permanent peace. I do not believe that there would have been even a League of Nations without the initiative of the English on both sides of the Atlantic, and I believe that the welcome and acquiescence of the other nations of the world in that project was due to their belief "in the word of the Englishmen," to their belief that the great section of mankind we English constitute and control would see the vast promises of President

Wilson through to a working reality. They thought that there was that much moral force in the world, and that the English-speaking masses embodied it and meant it.

I believe enough in the quality of my own people to be persuaded they were right. I believe that on November 11, 1918, the world was within sight of a broad, permanent settlement of its political affairs that would have ended war, that the war to end war had been fought and won, that the will to end war was sufficiently abundant to have carried that settlement through, and that it was the organization of that will that was wanting and failed. The will to end war was caught and baffled in a net of political and diplomatic evil habits. And particularly it was the will to end war in the United States and the British Empire which should naturally have been the backbone will of peace organization, that was ineffective and that was diffused and dispersed and defeated.

The failure of the will for peace in America to make itself effective has been discussed very thoroughly, and the broad facts are history; the disposition of President Wilson to make world peace the monopoly of the Democratic Party and the consequent estrangement of the Republican majority; his obsession by the idea of the sovereignty of "nationalities" and his incapacity to think out what he meant by a nationality; his diplomatic incompetence and intellectual and moral seclusion have been set out plainly in a huge literature of criticism, and so have the disgusts, re-

sentments, and fitfulness of the American people as it realized that its will for peace was thwarted, and sought to shift the blame from its own political institutions.

Now, as always, there is a manifest majority of voters in Great Britain on the left side in public affairs; the spirit of the British peoples is now, as it has been generally for a century, liberal, compromising, tolerant, and anxious for a fair deal between nation and nation; and yet at the present time the British Government is not simply aloof like the American from world direction, it is the leading force making for reaction. The present British Government is, in fact, doing its best to revive the rôle of the defeated Hohenzollern Imperialism, and if it can hold the Empire in its present course it will certainly steer the British people towards a fate that may repeat the German experience. And this it is able to do in spite of the national temperament and the high traditions of the English, because of the incapacity and short-sightedness of the politicians who have contrived to impose themselves upon the main masses of liberal thought.

That is the most momentous fact in world affairs at the present time. The paralysis of English liberalism carries with it the paralysis of progress throughout the world.

The elemental necessity before that moiety of the English people which forms the nucleus of the British Empire, if it is to go on playing its proper part in the

shaping of human destiny, is to get rid of Mr. Baldwin's Government and all its works as speedily as possible. It has to do this for its own sake and for the sake of the world's future. It has to shake itself clear of this imperialist militarism which is alien to its nature. It is an obligation. But when the English people turns to the Liberal and Labour politicians who should be translating its manifest will into achieved fact, it finds a crew of active and ingenious second-rate and third-rate men engaged in petty feuds and divided into two bitterly contentious camps, without a shadow of principle to distinguish them.

It is extraordinary how hard it is to separate Liberal from Labour Party men except by the fact that they are separated. Of many of these people I, who live fairly close to it all, do not know the party associations from day to day. Of So-and-so or So-and-so I asked: "Has he gone over or has he come back?"—it is so little a question of quality and so much of postal address. There seem to be rather more lawyers in the Liberal Party and many more glorified trade-union officials in the Labour Party, but a man like Commander Kenworthy, for example, can go from one party to the other or back again with as little change of nature as a performing sea lion hopping to and fro through a hoop. In power the Labour politicians have shown themselves mild snobs, socially ignorant rather than virtuous, and pathetically anxious to assure the world that there is no

danger of "Socialism in our time." They are Liberals in red ties who have to cater for the earnestness of the young supporter. On the Liberal side, wary, alert figures like Sir John Simon and Sir Herbert Samuel dodge and posture about with a manifest effort to look like the sort of commanding, attractive, and inspiring personalities English masses are supposed to trust and adore—these two are the more prominent of a whole host of commonplace careerists of no personal significance at all—and Mr. Lloyd George tries an infinitude of poses to catch the unifying spirit as it flits uncertain through the dither. Mr. Lloyd George might very well catch the unifying spirit if only the unifying spirit could be sure that it had caught him. But there is no outstanding figure at all to hold and reassure both factions. There might be in Philip Snowden were he physically a stronger man.

That is the situation. One by-election follows another. Each time the Government vote shrinks to a smaller proportion of the total; sometimes a Liberal scrapes in (and oh! the joy of Mr. Masterman), sometimes a Labour man, and sometimes the Conservative keeps his seat with close upon two-thirds of the poll against him. But in a general election the mutual animosities of these wrangling factions rise to a malice that prefers a Government victory to the success of the kindred competitor.

It is just as likely that the next election will leave the existing Government in power, a possibility

fraught with disaster to the whole world, as that either of these Opposition gangs will scramble to a greater total than the Tories.

Now to the great mass of English people these party feuds and bickerings between Liberal and Labour are a matter of entire insignificance. Nobody believes that the Labour Party has the courage or capacity to carry through any extensive socializing operations, nor that a Liberal Government would carry out a policy very different from that of a Labour Government. But either a Liberal or a Labour Government would release educational progress, check armament, relieve the world from the fear of adventures against Russia and China sustained more or less furtively by Britain, break the ugly association with Mussolini, show a living regard for free speech and private freedom, and reassure the forces of peace and civilization in France, Germany, Poland, and Hungary.

Either would do. The general desire is for one or the other, and the question which the politicians pose is Which? Both the Liberals and the Labour Party tricksters have in turn cheated the country out of proportional representation, which would have relieved us of much of this present difficulty. It is too late to go into that issue now. The primary concern of intelligent Englishmen now is to get rid of this Baldwin-Junker Ministry, which is as unpalatable to intelligent financial and business men, with some understanding of the necessary cosmopolitanism of

modern economic life, as it is to the main mass of liberal-minded labour.

How is this to be done?

It seems to me that the occasion would be best met by the formation of a series of new local political organizations, beside, and independent of, the local official Liberal and Labour Parties.

What is needed is a block of voters who will vote primarily against the Government and only secondarily for either Liberal or Labour. The sensible thing seems to be a vote in each constituency for whichever of these two political parties secured the largest vote against the Conservatives at the preceding contest, irrespective of all their bletherings against each other. One would vote Liberal here or one would vote Labour there in order not to waste one's vote. In that way the Government could be reduced to a minority, and probably a small minority in the House of Commons, and, whatever else happened, there would be an arrest of the threatened "Hohenzollernization" of British policy and the British Empire.

I do not know what supplies of non-partisan political energy are available in Great Britain at the present time. Certain newspapers—the "Express" group and Mr. Garvin's "Sunday Observer," for example—seem to care about as much for party loyalty as I do, and are probably at bottom quite of my mind about stopping the reactionary drift; they are conducted by men of imagination with a sense of the greatness of our people; others are mere party

organs, in which not merely the leading articles but the arrangements and display of news are calculated to favour one or other of the contending parties. But even among the readers of these biassed newspapers there must be a growing multitude impatient with the extraordinary way in which Great Britain at present belies itself and endangers the outlook of mankind. It needs but a crystallizing touch to give that impatience a form and a direction.

We want a "Wake Up, England!" movement in Great Britain, and not merely in Great Britain, but for all the English throughout the earth. We want a mood and form of politics that will save our destinies from our politicians while there are still great things to be saved.

*7 August, 1927.*

# VII

## BALDWINISM A DANGER TO THE WORLD. WANTED, A COALITION GOVERNMENT. THE DEADLOCK AND THE WAY OUT

THE ordinary game of politics bores me, and I rarely write about it. The manœuvres of X., Y., and Z. to get towards the head of the queue of possible tenants of No. 10, Downing Street, fill me with that cold disgust we all feel for vices to which we are not inclined. I have wanted many things in life, but never "place." The "party game" I have loathed from my youth up. My primary interest in the Labour Party was that it promised to end that game. Alas! it has only made it worse.

But there are times when some attention has to be paid to these detestable sports. Normally it matters very little to most of us whether the income tax is decreased or increased a little by X. or Y. or Z., and whether it is Z. or A. who damps our hopes for the education of the country. The Westminster permanent officials run their departments in very much the same manner whether it is a Tory or a Liberal or a Labour man who intervenes trivially in their sway. Why should I care whether it is Mr. Baldwin pretend-

ing to be a simple, honest farmer, or Mr. Ramsay MacDonald pretending to be a romantic gentleman, at 10, Downing Street?

Normally there is no reason at all. But it happens that this is an abnormal time, and, like millions of my fellow-countrymen, I wake up to find that this Baldwin Government, which we considered merely narcotic and drowsed under inattentively, is the most dangerous government that Britain has ever had. Its peculiar danger is that it has learnt nothing from the war, that its stupidity is not the passive stupidity we hoped and believed, but a very active stupidity, so that at three cardinal points it has set things moving in the direction of war.

In the first place, it has carried its support of the aggressive and reactionary Mussolini dictatorship to a pitch which amounts to a virtual betrayal of both France and the republican régime in Germany. We are under great obligations to France. In the past I criticized French policy when it seemed to be obsessed by a blind hostility to Germany, because I believed, and I still believe, that upon the development of a Franco-German friendship hangs all the hope we have of a great future for Europe. A liberal France, a liberal Germany in accord—the European future is utterly black without that accord. But to criticize France when she is aggressive is one thing, and to undermine her position in Europe is quite another. This tawdry, unclean tyranny in Italy insults and threatens France. Would it dare do that alone?

without American money and British moral support? without the hope that if it can entangle France in a conflict, all the suppressed barbarism of the other side in Germany, the side which is now the under-side, will flare up to its assistance? And this "safe" Government of ours in Britain moves not a finger to arrest this advancing disaster, can find no better rôle to play in such a European situation than that of Mussolini's friend.

Next comes the failure to get to an understanding with the United States upon the issue of disarmament. At the present time, as Kenworthy has demonstrated in the completest fashion in his recent book, Great Britain and the United States are arming against each other. Do people realize the significance of this? Neither country has, for example, an educational organization adequate to its needs and opportunities, and yet vast sums are being squandered, upon the advice of military and naval "experts," on military and naval preparations that are bringing these two countries, with the same language, a common culture, and a long tradition of mutual forbearance, more and more into the attitude of armed rivals. The Baldwin Government has its excuses for its failure at Geneva. It puts the blame on the American representatives. But who wants its excuses? Its failure is a crime.

Thirdly, we have the Russian muddle. For an amount of espionage and propaganda not much, if at all, greater than that normally practised by all the chief governments of the world—a publication like

"Asia," for example, coming from New Hampshire, is far more efficient as anti-Imperialist propaganda than anything the Russians have ever done—the Russian representatives in London were expelled in the most insulting manner, and the premises of the Russian Trade Delegation burgled. Ministers like Lord Birkenhead and Mr. Churchill reviled the régime in Russia unpardonably. What are the results? Trade is broken off. A market particularly desirable for the manufacturers of Great Britain is more or less closed. The world in general, and Russia in particular, is impressed with the idea that Great Britain is *the* enemy of the Soviet Government.

Naturally that Government does its best to retaliate. What would you do if you were a Russian? We British *oblige* the Russian Government to press on with whatever propaganda it conducts against us in Asia—in Turkey, China, India especially. What else can you imagine it doing? And it was totally unnecessary to stimulate this hostility and embitter this enemy. The antagonism was dying down. Intercourse was increasing. Trade was improving.

Now all that has been put back. The British have grimaced threats at Russia until now there is an active propaganda in Russia to prepare that people for the attack the blusterings of such Ministers as Mr. Churchill and the Home Secretary seem to forebode. And Britain trains a highly mechanicalized expeditionary force. So behind Britain and Central Asia, in the heart of Europe and across the Atlantic, the

spectre of war becomes more threatening, more substantial, less of a phantom and more of a possibility, with every month of this Government rule. Throughout the world the present British Government has been evoking the war idea and the war spirit.

I will say nothing of the social war this Government has waged at home. Grave as that is, it is dwarfed by the monstrous dangers of the international situation. I will not say that the British Government wants war—with two possible exceptions among its members. But it is stupid; its stupidity is that sort of mental inflexibility which makes men inadaptable to new circumstances. It goes on upon the old diplomatic, militarist, nationalist, and competitive lines that carried Europe so inevitably to the smash of 1914, and it has not the imagination to see plainly how surely it drives to another smash. If the present British Government remains in office for another five years that smash, I believe, will come.

I am not indulging here in single-handed prophecy. What I am writing here is realized now more or less lucidly by an immense multitude of observers. It lies upon the surface of things, just as the war of 1914 lay plainly on the surface of things for years before it came. And one might reasonably imagine that this great multitude would set about preparing to push the Government out of office effectively and thoroughly, would make sure of a complete purge of its supporter at the next general election. Nothing could be further

from the reality of the case. The same want of imagination that allows the British Government to drum along with international bickerings and military preparations towards a new great war robs the huge majority of people who are against the Government of any effective coherence. The Great War seems to have passed over the politicians in opposition with as small intellectual profit as it has over the Ministers in office.

In the face of a rapidly approaching disaster that may wreck civilized life, these people go on with the old tricks and the old antics that distinguished political life in those days of apparently eternal security when good Queen Victoria sat upon the throne. They do not seem to see that there is any situation or any stream of events outside the little arena in which they manœuvre against each other for office and the petty glories of a party triumph. Two figures in particular I contemplate with blank amazement. One is Sir Herbert Samuel. I am loth to believe him as silly as his public proceedings. But of their immense silliness there can be no doubt. He is the figure-head of pure party Liberalism. He is the typical advocate of the candidature of those five hundred Liberal candidates who are everywhere to wage implacable warfare against the Labour Party. Everywhere they are to busy themselves in breaking up the peace vote and, if they cannot get in themselves, letting in the Tory—and war.

Over against him is Ramsay MacDonald, a figure

of fantastic vanity and secretiveness, equally resolute on keeping the Labour Party in bitter antagonism to the Liberals—though the heavens fall. The poor little "Daily Herald" under his influence spends most of its ammunition on the Liberals, and the mere whisper of "coalition" is treated like an attack upon fundamental political virtue. The implacable stupidity of both these groups, the pure party Liberals and the pure party Labourites, exceeds even the unteachable stupidity of the Government policy. And they are helping it forward. When the bombs begin to burst and the smash comes Sir Herbert Samuel and Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, because of their inveterate party spirit, will be as responsible for the disaster as Mr. Amery or Mr. Baldwin.

But the question I have been asking myself and most of the people I have been meeting lately is, "What are we personally going to do about it?" Like the majority of people in Great Britain, I want a coalition of the Liberal and Labour Parties. That plainly is our salvation. I realize—surely everyone realizes—that the internal legislation and the foreign policy of a Liberal Government in Great Britain for the next ten years at least would be substantially the same as that of a Labour Government. Of the two Mr. MacDonald is the least likely to move a step towards Socialism. The pretence of any irreconcilable fundamental differences does not deceive 5 per cent. of the British Electorate. The Liberals might be rather more economical and skimpy over social serv-

ices and the Labour people more snobbish and more extravagant over the army, navy, and air services. The blend might indeed be better than either party, faults might cancel out. And since I am convinced that people like Sir Herbert Samuel and Mr. Ramsay MacDonald are incurably set upon their party follies, I am obliged, we are obliged, to cast about for other figures upon which we may concentrate our enthusiasm and to whom we may look for some sort of leadership beyond mere party strategy in the approaching struggle.

One's mind turns to Mr. Lloyd George. He is a seasoned Coalitionist, and he is plainly disposed towards another Coalition. He has made alluring gestures towards the left, but an unusual hesitation to return them is apparent. Plainly Labour, though it may work with him, will not put itself under him.

And that applies not merely to the party-obsessed Labour people. We all like Mr. Lloyd George, but at times he veils his solid worth beneath an agility and flexibility that leaves us uneasy. I do not know if we can look at him to play a secondary rôle in a combination. It would necessarily be a very considerable rôle. And, after all, he is technically a Liberal, and the majority of the anti-Government mass is Labour. The headship of any combination for the preservation of peace in the world should reside in the majority. The leader should be a Labour man. This also excludes Lord Cecil, with his traditional attitude towards Church and land, from the formal

leadership. So one turns to the Labour Party and looks for a Coalitionist there.

I consider Henderson, Thomas, Clynes, all surely Ministers in a coalition, but none of them quite what we require as a figure-head. Then I come to Snowden and stop. There, I believe, is the man who can best lead the British Empire, under a Coalition Government, back to sanity, security, and the service of peace. There is a certain quality of greatness about Snowden which is not very widely distributed in our political world to-day. I suppose that among statesmen, politicians, and public servants of all types and parties, Philip Snowden is more generally respected and would be more willingly trusted than any other contemporary. He is a man whose public character, quite as much as his private character, is without spot or blemish. He is a man of real capacity and great personal force. He is the man we want. And I do not see why we, the growing multitude of British people who want to get rid of this dangerous Government of ours who do not care a rap either way for the Liberal "machine" or the Labour "machine," should not set about getting him now.

Would he serve us? Probably not at first. He might plead his allegiance to his party. But there are popular invitations that have the force of commands. Would Mr. Lloyd George work with him? I do not know. Mr. Lloyd George has neither the narrow-mindedness of Sir Herbert Samuel nor the lonely vanity of Mr. MacDonald. He is quite capable of

magnanimity; and for him also a strong popular feeling, effectively expressed, might have imperative force. Many of the dissentient Liberals, on account of minor feuds and unforgettable sayings during those feuds, would, I know, serve much more gladly under Snowden as a leader than under Lloyd George.

But at the present stage of affairs I do not see why we should wait upon the Tadpoles and Tapers to fix up this arrangement for us. The growing multitude of people who see things in this way has the power to force this combination over the heads of the party managers. We can write; we can organize; we are not without a Press. Why wait while the leaders negotiate?

At the next election it will be comparatively simple for us to disregard the difference between Liberalism and Labour altogether. When we find ourselves in any constituency where a Liberal is trying to cut down a Labour majority or where a Labour candidate is trying to cut down a Liberal majority, we can vote solidly for the legitimate claimant to the seat, whether he be Liberal or Labour. When we hear the Liberal beginning to make his little points against Labour or the Labour man chipping the Liberal, instead of getting on to the real business in hand, the proper comment is a loud "Bah!" repeated until the gentleman takes notice. Then we shall get the maximum number of Liberals and Labour men into the House of Commons, and when they are there they will have to shake down into a coalition whether they like it or not.

The Labour Party is surely not so foolish as to take office in a minority again, with the Liberals primly in possession of what Sir Herbert Samuel calls the "casting vote," and equally will the Liberals refuse to shoulder responsibility alone. Everybody in Parliament knows that Coalition waits at the end of the passage even if a second election intervenes. Why have the expense and delay of a second election? As practical people with an empire to save, let us get on to that coalition now.

*27 November, 1927.*

# VIII

## COMMUNISM AND WITCHCRAFT

I HAVE recently been reading the "History of Witchcraft and Demonology," by Mr. Montague Summers, and various utterances upon the Soviet Government of Russia by supporters of the present enlightened Government of the British Empire, and I find a curious confusion in my mind between the two. Mr. Summers, like all good Catholics, is a believer in witchcraft; and he hates witches as soundly and sincerely as the British county families hate the "Reds"; and he believes as freely and fiercely about the detested breed. Here is a passage, and I will leave the reader to guess whether it is from the pages of Mr. Summers or the columns of a Conservative newspaper on the eve of a general election:

The witch or the Red (as the case may be) is "an evil liver; a social pest and parasite; the devotee of a loathly and obscene creed; an adept at poisoning, blackmail, and all creeping crimes; a member of a powerful secret organization inimical to Church and State; a blasphemer in word and deed; swaying the villagers by terror and superstition; a charlatan and a quack sometimes, a . . ."—here I censor my author-

ity—"an . . ."—the censorship is really imperative; "a minister of vice and inconceivable corruption; battening upon the filth and foulest passions of the age."

The doubts the simple, honest reader of the British Conservative Press will feel—whether this is the more accurate description of Mother Shipton, Gilles de Rais, any Knight Templar, the late Mr. Krassin, Mr. Lunacharsky, or Lenin—will do much to carry out the interesting views of that great historical writer, Mrs. Nesta Webster, that modern Communism is the lineal descendant of the black traditions of medieval sorcery, Manichean heresies, Free Masonry, and the Witch of Endor. Be that as it may, modern Communism is certainly heir now to the estate of fear and terror which descends to us from the past.

Perhaps mankind has a standing need for somebody to tar, feather, and burn. Perhaps if there was no devil, men would have to invent one. In a more perfect world we may have to draw lots to find who shall be the witch or the "Red," or the heretic or the nigger, in order that one man may suffer for the people. Mr. Summers' book makes interesting, disagreeable reading of the sort that enhances its excitement here and there by a coy resort to transparent Latin; and it shows Popes and prelates and Puritans, kings and judges, all manner of respectable people, succumbing to exactly the same sort of emotional disturbance that now makes membership of the Communist Party so dangerous, exciting, and attractive

to the light-minded young of Western Europe and America. Nothing was too dreadful for belief about witches and warlocks, and, alas for the feebleness of the human imagination, most things, it is felt, were not nearly dreadful enough. They made mischief, they fostered strikes, and they raised storms and insurrections in such scanty leisure as a constant round of Witches' Sabbaths allowed. They were drowned, tortured, beaten, and burnt alive, and still the kindly righteous had a baffling sense of inadequate retort to all the bestial cruelty and wickedness charged against them.

As one turns over the record of Mr. Summers' book, it is fairly plain to any one not under a conscientious necessity to believe in witchcraft that all these waves of inquisition and cruelty were a sort of pooling of the normal indignation of mankind against the orgies and queer and vile acts that lurk at the roots of our animal nature, and of our fear of the tricks and malicious resentments of inferior and unhappy people, and a direction of this pooled force of disapproval and hostility against heresy, sedition, and unpopular opinions generally. Gilles de Rais was an insane murderer, guilty of almost incredibly bestial cruelties, but his wickedness was pinned to heresy and made an excuse against the gentlest and purest of unbelievers. Evil men, you said were heretics, and then when some one ventured to differ from your high orthodoxy you charged him promptly with

organized association with filth and every form of evil. If any one questioned your theology, well, manifestly he was a second Gilles de Rais. Mr. Summers, for instance, has no doubt that great epidemics of witchcraft followed doctrinal disputes; that religious doubt and a flirtatious alliance with the devil were in the sequence of cause and effect.

To-day there are many signs that the "Red" has a good chance of playing the part of the witch of older times in a new world mania. The examination of Sacco and Vanzetti, charged with ordinary murder and robbery, upon their political opinions, in the Massachusetts courts, was quite in the vein of the old witch trials. "Tell me what you think," said the prosecution, "and what you did may be judged by that." It is wonderful how witch-hanging Massachusetts has kept true to its old traditions.

This tendency to associate unpopular opinions with murderable offences seems to be an increasing one on both sides of the Atlantic. I am sure it needs only a very slight Press campaign to convince any number of people in London that when Sir W. Joynson-Hicks made his preposterous raid on the Soviet business headquarters in search of an alleged stolen paper, members of the Arcos staff escaped on broomsticks from an upper window with that wonderful confidential document the police sought and never found. When I came back from Russia in 1920 and wrote that Lenin seemed an intelligent little man, who was

rather at a loss what to do with the great country that had fallen so wonderfully into his hands, I pleased nobody. The Communists and Left Labour people wanted extravagant praise and a glorification of a state of affairs that seemed to me to be a frightful muddle, and the anti-Bolshevik witch-hunters wanted yarns about orgies in the Kremlin, Mme. Lenin dressed up in the Russian Crown jewels, drinking champagne out of cups of gold in the worst possible taste, and aristocratic babies being tortured and murdered after dinner just for fun and devilry by commissars. They wanted to excite themselves about Moscow, just as the mediæval witch-hunters excited themselves with wild imaginations about the Witches' Sabbaths.

Failing "hot stuff" of that sort, the anti-Bolsheviks were convinced I was in the pay of Moscow. They wanted their Bolsheviks not small and bothered, but horrible. They wanted me to make their blood run cold. They wanted to work themselves up into a frenzy of indignation, terror, and violence.

And they wanted to do so because, as I say, there seems to be in the dark, tortuous, and dangerous heart of man a real craving for vehement self-righteous persecution and enthusiastic and irrational punishment. I know. I have felt it in me. If I have never killed and massacred in the waking day, I have known all these bright reliefs and excitements in dreams. And in reveries.

To any one who can think about Bolshevism and

retain a normal temperature the facts are as plain as daylight. Russia has been, is, and must remain for some time to come a largely barbaric country. Large areas of Russia are still as backward as England was in Tudor times, and few of its towns have a social life much in advance of early nineteenth-century conditions in Great Britain. It was in the days of the Czar, and it is to-day, a backward land of hardships and intense discomforts, a land of rough methods, frequent crimes, and much sporadic cruelty. Until ten years ago it was ruled by a stupid, disorderly, and tyrannous autocracy—superstitious and hostile to education—which collapsed through sheer inherent rottenness under the stresses of the Great War. The resources of Russia were so wasted, and its army so ruthlessly handled in that war, as to wreck the whole social system. Those Bolsheviks are in possession of the wreck. They are in possession because they were the only people with sufficient faith, discipline, and determination to hold together in the general chaos.

But they are neither gods nor devils. They are limited, conceited, and as liable to witch panics and suspicion mania as the most enlightened citizens of Middlesex or Massachusetts. Their "reprisals" for the Arcos raid and for the various recent murders of their members would have disgraced a lynching State in the American Union. They cling to the old theories and dogmas of Marx, half a century stale. They seem as little capable of modern industrial organization as the British coal-owners, and their need is far

more urgent. They have a percentage of cads, roughs, and scoundrels hanging to them which may or may not be higher than the similar percentage of any political party in Britain or America. They are as a whole just a band of worried, rather incompetent doctrinaires, some able and sympathetic, some obtuse and dangerous, and they have an empire on their hands. There they are, the only possible Government for Russia, and if they are submerged, nothing will be left of Russia but a wilderness of warring brigand armies and barbaric peasants. Failing them Russia will repeat on a larger, more dreadful scale, and without the same substructure of civilized urban tradition, the Germany of the Thirty Years' War.

They will probably resent my conception of them as muddled, overstrained men with an old-fashioned and inapplicable social theory to guide them in an overwhelming job, far more than the current idea of them as a crew of super-devils. Like the mediæval witches, they threaten and boast to keep up their self-respect, and so they bring down upon themselves the cowardly violence of the timid. Whatever happens abroad to the discomfort of the American or European capitalists they claim as the result of their marvellous machinations. It is a pitiful posturing.

I do not believe that the coal muddle and that dismal strike of last year would have happened any differently if Russia had never existed. They have a conceit of ordering about the labouring classes of the earth. It is touching. I found poor Lenin in the

Kremlin swallowing the stuff in Miss Sylvia Pankhurst's "Dreadnought" as the current opinion of the British "proletariat."

As a matter of fact, in all the world from end to end outside Russia—I am not forgetting China—the Communist Party cannot count upon the services of twenty thousand men or raise half a million pounds. It is always poking into gatherings and claiming to have called them, jumping on coaches driven by other people and pretending to run them. The only advantage of this sort of rubbish to the Bolsheviks is to give the simple Russian worker a good conceit of himself and his rulers, but it is disastrous to the friends of the worker everywhere. It supplies the witch-finder and the hunter of radicals with just the "'orrible 'orrible" evidence he needs.

When I visited the House of Science in Petrograd in 1920, there was a Communist Party representative who had poked in among the men of science to explain how different and superior "Marxist" chemistry and astronomy were to the bourgeois teaching, and Fülop-Miller's "Geist and Gesicht des Bolshewismus" (which has recently been translated into English) collects, with destructive malice and deadly illustrations, flagrant examples of the nonsense about new philosophy, new science, new art, new religion, new everything, newer and better than ever before, with which the Bolsheviks console themselves in their grim and from many aspects amazingly plucky struggle to keep a strained and damaged civilization going and

even progressing, in the face of the extravagant hatred and hostility of the outer world.

If only people would recognize, first, that Russia is, and must be for some decades, a very backward country, and that, whatever Government rules there, rough and barbaric things are bound to happen; second, that the whole of the Bolshevik propaganda is about as injurious to modern capitalism as the brews and spells of those poor old women our ancestors found such satisfaction in burning alive were to the people against whom they were aimed; third, that panic, violence, brag, bad manners, and petty irritations towards foreigners are not the monopoly of the Bolsheviks; and, fourth, that the existing Government of Russia is the only possible Government there at the present time; and that the only hope of saving the vast areas and resources of European and Asiatic Russia for civilization lies in getting to some working compromise with that Government and co-operating in its development—if, I say, people would bear these fairly obvious things in mind, I should be able to look forward with more confidence to the immediate future of the world than I feel at the present time. But with Britain in the hands of a Government suffering from witch mania with regard to Russia and the ruling powers of America in little better case, with the liberalism of the world leaderless, misrepresented, and confused, there is a very considerable probability that that ailing State will be, as a potential modern State, ruined and destroyed in the next few decades.

Nothing will be achieved by the overthrow of Bolshevism in Russia as the result of this witch mania but the completer desolation of a great area of the old world.

*21 August, 1927.*

## IX

### THE FUTURE OF LABOUR. THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN CAPITAL AND LABOUR. CONTROVERSIAL HALLUCINATIONS

A CORRESPONDENT in America writes to suggest an article on the struggle between Capital and Labour, and what it is coming to. To-morrow in the United States is the legal holiday for the celebration of Labour, and it seems an appropriate date for some general remarks that have been accumulating in my mind about this indisputable struggle.

I am afraid I shall disappoint my correspondent. From some phrases in his letter I am inclined to think he expects me to be violently partisan in this issue, to foretell the doom of the capitalist system and the great days when Labour alone shall rule the earth. This shows a lamentable ignorance of my voluminous and—I am told—correctly I think—reiterative works. I cannot hope for the abolition of the capitalist system, because I do not believe there is a capitalist system, and my only aspiration for Labour is that it should get right off the earth. I believe this conflict between Capital and Labour is like that great struggle between Arianism and Trinitarianism, which tore the Roman world to pieces thirteen or fourteen cen-

turies ago; that is to say, I regard it as a struggle about theoretical definitions having only the remotest relationship to any fundamental realities in life. Most Christians nowadays, I remark, are Arians professing a Trinitarian creed, and much the same effacement may overtake this false antagonism of Capital and Labour. We may come to a world of capitalist professing to be a Labour community. Or we may follow quite other and more rational lines of development.

Most of the issues upon which men are antagonized in crowds—because of the uniformity of our intelligences and the eagerness of our minds—are false issues. Throughout all history most human conflicts have turned on false issues. The issue of patriotism, for example, is so false that it is indelicate almost to the treasonable pitch to say so.

But, braving the indelicacy, can any intelligent person argue to-day that patriotism nowadays has anything whatever to do with race, or thought? Take a concrete example to illustrate this current insanity. My distant cousin and namesake at Chicago, Professor H. G. Wells, the eminent physiologist, living under the stresses of his local patriotism, is obliged to pay for the construction of cruisers and aeroplanes to protect himself, the American Constitution, and the Standard Oil Company against me, and I am obliged to pay for the construction of cruisers and aeroplanes to protect the House of Windsor, the Anglo-Dutch Oil people, and this Wembley Exhibition Empire of ours,

against him, when, as a matter of the most obvious common sense, we are so much akin and so much after the same ends, that what we both need is mutual protection from these monsters of the imagination that have got hold of us, and which are quite likely to gas us or blow us to shreds before they have done with us. Clearly we two are parts of the same biological, intellectual, and moral strain, we belong to the same civilization, we are of one outlook, blood, and name, and our chief real political interest is to get rid of these people in uniform, these diplomatists, and the difference of our flags, which may in the end waste most of the good of both our lives in a fatuous war.

And it is equally false to imagine that because the evil passions of men can be involved to the pitch of judicial murder—at least in such barbaric countries as Soviet Russia or Italy or Massachusetts—there is any profound matter involved in this century-old conflict between Capital and Labour that muddles our minds and devastates our public affairs to-day. It is a conflict embodying certain easy misconceptions of social, and particularly of economic, life. It is an incidental squabble exaggerated to the dimensions of a fundamental process. But it rules a huge proportion of current political activity. It is another of the great hallucinations which make history in our time and prepare infinite perplexity for the historians of the days to come.

This "capitalist system" has never been defined;

it has merely been indicted. Try to define it. "Labour" is equally undefined. According to a Communist informant, "Labour" is the proletariat, that is to say, the people who produce offspring for whose education and upbringing they have made no provision. It is the propertyless class which works for wages and breeds so that it keeps those wages down to the subsistence level.

There certainly is such a class in most countries where there are towns and cities, but it is a residual class. It is much more in evidence in a mediæval city like Hankow than in a modern city like New York. In China the brigand armies now prevalent are drawn largely from that class. It supplies the gang labour which under recent conditions took the place of gang slavery. The pressure of its hunger exercises a degrading influence upon life in general. So far it justifies the "proletarian" legend. But it is absurd to project its characteristics and limitations over the great multitude of workers in a modern community. It is preposterous to present economic life as substantially the exploitation of this class by a hard-minded minority.

In the United States the actual proletariat, as we have defined it, must be a very small proportion of the population. There is less of such exploitation of degraded propertyless people now than there was a hundred years ago, and it is a diminishing factor in economic life.

If we abandon this romantic, this Victor Hugo-

esque conception of "Labour" as living in rags and slums, and begin to incorporate semi-skilled and skilled workers with savings, insurances, and other property and a certain minimum of education, and peasants with leases or owning land, we shall cease to have any definite boundary to stop us, and before we know where we are we shall find ourselves in perplexity whether in this or that case we are dealing with a capitalist or a worker, "exploiter" or exploited. We may draw our social boundaries, we shall find, anywhere. If we draw them sufficiently high we may arrive at last at the proposition that every activity in the State is "Labour," and that nothing lies outside that term except a few usurers, gamblers, criminals, official parasites, and the heirs of rich men.

The economic processes of the modern community and the psychology of these processes are, as a matter of fact, extraordinarily complex and still largely unmapped, and they yield to no such elementary antagonism as the Capital and Labour picture assumes. Human beings carry on by use and wont. They are imitative, habitual, mechanical, lazy, greedy, and afraid; there is no such simple, shark-like consumption of the honest toiling community by highly intelligent property owners as the legend suggests. Property in excess does not make most people either active or aggressive; generally it makes them indolent, insolent, evasive, and wasteful. Property in small quantities brings out much inherent meanness and causes much anxiety. It terrifies more often than it

stimulates. Want of any possessions leaves people spiritless, driven, or desperate. A sense of secure earning-power is at the same time the basis for the satisfaction of most people who are satisfied in the modern State, and the thing most conducive to activity.

It is across the seething, swarming stir of miscellaneous modern life that these great collective hallucinations of patriotism and of class assertion sweep. We are worried or out-of-sorts, and suddenly, under their influence, we see ourselves threatened or oppressed and the victims of a malignant conspiracy to keep us down. If we get the patriotic delusion, this inclines us to war; if the Capital and Labour notion, to revolution. When Labour Days and Labour holidays come round, a certain number of us gather in meetings and processions to menace the phantoms that we suppose afflict or threaten us and our kind.

Menaces find a billet somewhere. A number of rich and well-off people, secretly conscious of a poor contribution to the general well-being, struggle not only against their consciences, but against a gnawing fear of retribution and expropriation. They have a lingering and troublesome belief that God may be righteous, and that these vague threatenings of the uncomfortable and limited may foreshadow the method of His judgment.

They are probably wrong upon the latter count, at any rate. I do not believe that under modern conditions, in a modern mechanicalized State, common

low-grade labour is capable of carrying through a revolution, much less a big social reconstruction. Something like a world revolution may occur in the smash that may follow another great war, a greater Soviet experiment, for example; but it will not be in reality a constructive revolution, but merely a phase in the process of that human collapse to which war must surely bring us all, if we do not head off war. There will be no Labour-ruled world because, as I have said, "Labour" so conceived is a phantom form imposed upon a great complex of forces.

But these rich and well-off idle people do believe that phantom is real, and a multitude of politicians, journalists, and organization-running rogues prey on their fears to extract subsidies for political groups, newspapers, and "anti-Socialist" propaganda, and to conduct a persecution of "Left" opinion. They embody the "Capitalist" antagonism to "Labour," and give it a voice and a countervailing crazy group of ideas, fears, loyalties, and motives. They "frame up" cases to murder talkative fish pedlars and the like, and feel much safer for a bit after such squalid acts of defence against these absurd but impotent threats to their comfort and self-complacency.

Meanwhile the mills of God are grinding against them in a manner they do not understand nor suspect. They really believe they are a beneficent "Capitalist System" malignantly pursued by the unsuccessful, and as sincerely do a great multitude of excellent people believe that they are "Labour" implacably

oppressed by a "Capitalist System." It is just as though we classified all the colour in the world as either pink or green.

The more we clear our minds of this prevalent hallucination about Capitalism versus Labour the more we shall be able to distinguish the real processes at work in our world now. So far from there having been a progressive enslavement of the masses of mankind during the past hundred years, there has been a great release from toil. In the civilizations of the ancient world, slavery or serfdom seems to have been a necessity in the economic process. The only source of power, except for a slight use of wind and water mills, was human or animal muscle.

The most fundamental facts in human history during the past two centuries have been, first, the rapid progressive replacement of human toil, not merely of muscular toil, but of toilsome skilled effort, by a magnificent development of mechanism; and, secondly, an enormous increase of the amount of energy available for human purposes. A certain fraction of this increase has no doubt been consumed in reckless breeding; a much larger part has been and is being wasted in the traditional fooleries and cruelties of war and war preparation, due to our continued toleration of the uniform and title-worshipping classes. And the increase in prosperity itself has been, and is, much less rapid than was possible, because of the vague but powerful traditions of proprietary method which have hampered the development of

new larger-scale dealing with national resources. The enlargement of the machine has outrun the lawyer, the legislator, and the banker, and they have still to come up to its enlarged possibilities. Until they do, the machinery of modern life clogs, drags, and is dangerous.

But when all these deductions have been made, there remains in hand a huge achievement of welfare, freedom, and hope in the last two hundred years due entirely to inventions and discovery, science and common sense. The facts of material advance are altogether more important in the history of the past two centuries than the amount of subjection and human frustration that has occurred during this period. The former are new phenomena, the latter are old conditions of life that have, if anything, diminished.

The line of progress lies not in these disputes about proprietary rights and claims upon the ever more bountiful gifts of science and invention, but in the search for the most efficient means of turning these gifts to the general advantage. There is a growing science of industrial psychology and industrial efficiency. It is, I believe, likely to develop into a very powerful group of ideas and realizations.

At present it concerns itself mainly with the question of how to secure the most effective labour. We discover that long hours are often less profitable to every one concerned than reasonably short hours; that air, light, and cheerful conditions for the worker

are good investments. The investigations spread to an inquiry into the worker's home. Presently we shall realize that the waste of strikes, unwilling service, sabotage, and other forms of industrial friction is largely due to the want of reasonable hope in the worker's life. It will be good business and good politics to give the worker hope and security. And it will be impossible to study industrial efficiency in the mine and field and workshop, we shall find, and ignore the bearing of the country house and the director's home upon the quality of the economic services rendered. In other words, we shall bring the social system to the touchstone of efficiency instead of to the bar of justice.

Few people nowadays defend or attack private property on grounds of abstract morality and justice. Ownership is not an institution of the order of primary right. Ownership is an institution that has to be justified. The case of individualism against collectivism stands or falls almost entirely upon the assertion that competitive individualism gives a larger and better product always than any non-competitive system. The case of the socialist is that this is untrue. Without limitation it is a very incredible assertion that the individualist makes. Neither case has ever been proved, but the study of the psychology of economic life, as it extends, is bound to turn what are at present mere wranglings for a greater share in the economic output into a search for the most productive arrangements for work and living.

Then mankind may find that while the administration of transport, credit, land, and natural resources are far better taken out of the domain of private proprietorship into the collective control either of public authorities or *quasi*-public trusts, there are other directions, householding, many forms of cultivation and construction and artistic work, for example, in which a great increase in independent proprietorship is desirable. While socialization progresses in some directions, individualism will assert itself in others. And always machinery and mechanical organization will be dispensing with toil. In the long run it seems probable that the sort of thing we understand by "Labour" now will dwindle to a small, minor, and unimportant class in the community, and that simultaneously there may be an absorption of much privately owned wealth by a scientifically conducted collective administration. While we are representing life in melodramatic colours as a struggle between the "Haves" and the "Have-nots," the less romantic but infinitely more subtle and interesting reality of a struggle between scientific organization on the one hand and the alliance of personal greed with chaotic stupidity on the other may be undermining all the grounds of our melodrama.

Such being my convictions, I do not find myself excited by the advent of a Labour Day to any demonstrations against the Capitalist System. I refrain with perfect ease from gathering in mass meetings or pouring in my myriads, with banners and bands and

red flags, through the streets of great cities. I do not believe Labour is marching to triumph; I believe it is soaking away towards absorption in a modern mechanicalized community of a middle-class type. A day will come when Labour Day will be a quaint and interesting anniversary, like fireworks in November in London or beating the bounds of some old English borough.

*4 September, 1927.*

# X

## WHAT IS THE BRITISH EMPIRE WORTH TO MANKIND? MEDITATIONS OF AN EMPIRE CITIZEN

THE other day I was turning out the drawers of a bureau, and I came upon a little collection of printed cards and papers, the agenda and minutes of a dinner-discussion club of which I was a member far back in the days of good King Edward, when Mr. Joseph Chamberlain was raising the banner of Tariff Reform. It was a small club of thirteen, and I was the least in it; never a government then or since that has not contained a member or so of it; and the aim of all our talks was to sharpen our ideas about the Empire to which we belonged and to come to some sort of agreement, if we could, about what we wanted to do with it and how we had to serve it. We never came to any agreement; Tariff Reform cleft us from the beginning, but I doubt if any one of us failed to give something or to learn much in these agreeable encounters.

I sat recalling these old discussions and linking them with writings of mine that preceded and followed them. I have been writing and thinking and talking about the Empire for thirty years. My ideas have changed and expanded; my knowledge has

grown, I have moved with the times. Except that I have put more of it on record and so checked my steps more exactly, my thoughts and feelings about the Empire have probably been very like the thoughts and feelings of thousands of mediocre liberal Englishmen. It is interesting to recall some of the chief phases of the story.

I have had a phase of disillusionment about the Empire since 1919 so intense that I have come near to a complete antagonism to "Imperialism." But as I sit over these papers and think not merely of my own reactions, but of some of the "Empire builders" and Empire rulers I have known—Sir Harry Johnston, Sir Hugh Clifford, Lord Olivier, for example—I find myself still reluctant to turn against all the dreams of that liberal Imperialism of twenty years ago. For twenty years ago I was a firm believer in the great importance of the British Empire to mankind, and as hostile as I am to-day to the Nationalisms that set themselves up against it.

I am still—I am even more—anti-nationalist to-day. I see no good at all in people getting together into groups to exaggerate and overvalue their own peculiarities and run down, exclude, and injure the rest of mankind. I find nothing charming in the faked-up national costumes—which are all alike all over Europe, women in muslin caps and bits of red and black stuff, and men in pearl buttons—national arts —thumby bits of wood carving, pottery, and lace that are even more the same thing everywhere—

national dialects, national literatures, and national symbols, which pretend to discursiveness but really aim to pickle a dismal uniformity of petty localism, conceit, narrow-mindedness, and customary tyranny, throughout the continent. I am all for Cosmopolis and the high-road, and when I find nationalism rising to intricate interferences with trade and money, the free movement of men and goods about this none too large a planet, boastings, hostilities, armies, and the strangulation of the general welfare in the interests of the gangs exploiting patriotic instincts, my lack of enthusiasm deepens to positive hatred.

I think I was born cosmopolitan. I could never sympathize completely, though I realized the reality of their peculiar grievances, with the preference of the southern Irish to be lords upon their own dunghills rather than partners of the Ulstermen, the English, Scotch, and Welsh in the world adventure of the Empire, and, though I had qualms about the aims and methods of Cecil Rhodes and Dr. Jameson, I thought it was better to keep South Africa united and part of a great world system than to permit two illiberal republics to monopolize the Kaffir vitality and mineral wealth of a great region that should benefit all humanity. I have never found Nationalism even a plausible excuse for the sterilization of some great area of potential wealth because a backward people happened to live upon it. The whole earth is for the whole race.

But even in those dinner-club discussions of twenty

years ago very marked divergencies of opinion and spirit became manifest. Our opening discussion was upon the possibility of an Imperial Zollverein, and that question, we found, went to the very root of our ideas. Did we want to unite the Empire, economically, financially, politically, militarily, against the rest of the world or not? Was it to be a closed fist in imitation of the Teutonic Zollverein, or an open hand to all the world?

I recall with satisfaction that it was I who appealed to geography and introduced the figure of the open hand. Our British fingers, I argued, spread over the whole keyboard of the world. We could never sound a uniform note. Canada, India, New Zealand, were incurably divergent, except in the idea of a common peace, and that uniformity in diversity was our asset. We had the confidence of foreign states in our tropical and other "raw-product" possessions, because we stood—in those days—not for monopolization, but the open door. The less assertive we were, the more possible it would be for other kindred powers to work with us and work out forms of co-operation with us in our task of coalescing and evolving into a world-wide civilization.

That sort of idea about the empire was very prevalent in those days of twenty years ago. Kipling went about calling upon Americans and Germans, and indeed all Europe, to take up the "White Man's Burthen"—and at the time of its first issue that memorable burden was intended to be something

quite other than a mere bundle of loot. The Rhodes scholarships are another fossil good intention which remains to us from that age of potential incorporation. Americans and Germans at least were to be made like-minded with the British at Oxford! The idea of the eventual amalgamation of the Empire with other Powers in some comprehensive world control was, indeed, constantly cropping up. This involved no more thought of overcoming or conquering other competitors than did the big series of bank and industrial amalgamations that have occurred in Great Britain since the war. It was a pool we had in mind. The Empire was seen as the pacific precursor of a practical world State. Our "raw-material" possessions were seen as part of the common estate of the human race, our share in a trusteeship; our Navy as a world police that might be at last as denationalized as the Knights Templars. These expansive possibilities were what attracted me to that club, and that, if I may name him, was what attracted Mr. Bertrand Russell, who was also one of our thirteen.

But against us we found from the outset a group of Empire patriots, who were all for the Empire of the clenched fist. They were fierce fellows who believed that life was a violent struggle and that what one had in the world had to be held savagely against all comers. They did not want to unite the world, they wanted to subdue it to their conception of what was British. Whatever was British was right—kings, Lords and Commons, our remarkable orthography,

Ascot and the Derby, cricket and the Boat Race, the faithful Sikh and Simla, and the Navy. The outer world had to admire us, serve our purposes, and carry itself humbly towards us. They were, in fact, glorified Nationalists; their Imperialism was merely Nationalism distended, arrogant, intolerant of rivalry. Our fiercest member at every feast prepared our minds for war with Germany. He saw things quite simply: we had the best place in the world, and Germany wanted to take it, and we had to prepare for a fight. Education, efficiency of production, these Imperialists of the clenched fist saw only as necessary evils forced upon us by German competition. Their attitude to the Empire was what one might call the United Services attitude, a pose of unquestioning devotion. It is the exact parallel of the devotion that surrounded the German Kaiser in his glorious days. "The Empire right or wrong," they said, "whatever it was, whatever it became, whatever it did."

Naturally and logically they wanted a tariff wall and indeed every sort of wall about this divine reserve of earth, great armies and an overwhelming fleet, and outside it nations as poor, divided, and incapable of disturbing it as possible. That was the Nationalist-Imperialist idea as distinct from the Cosmopolitan-Imperialist idea that Russell and I embodied.

One evening when I was absent and the attendance was exceptionally low, there was a great dispute between Russell and four of the Nationalist-Imperialists. They were ready, they said, to die for the

Empire, or commit any informality to serve it. Russell said there were quite a number of things on which he put a higher value than the Empire, and that if it came to a choice on these cases he would be against the Empire. This opinion I share. But that night the talk grew heated, and Russell, without waiting for the next meeting and reinforcements, resigned, and we saw him no more. Which was a pity, because one great charm of those discussions was the depth of the crevasses we found between us, and Russell was certainly the centre of the deepest crevasse system of all.

This incident, however, did pose for me quite plainly what is after all the essential question for all of us so far as our political lives go, whether the political system we live in is to be regarded as an end in itself, a divine unquestionable thing, or whether it is to be considered merely a transitory means to a greater end, to be judged on its merits, to be used, altered, and in the end gradually or completely replaced by something better. The Roman citizen was compelled to worship the Empire like a god, the Empire indivisible and eternal. Many people in Europe and America would impose the same uncritical abjection towards the American Constitution or the British Empire. You must salute, you must stand, stiff and stupid. Behind this personal abjection lurks moral corruption, a sort of collective scoundrelism. You must not trade fair and square, you must favour "Empire" goods. You must not publish

scientific truth, but make whatever you discover an "Empire" secret. You may spy, you may lie for the "Empire's" sake. Such "loyalty" I repudiate as an insult to humanity. I refuse my pinch of incense on that altar.

And I will go on to say that a British Empire which does not seem to me to be realizing the wide and generous dreams of the liberal imperialism with which the century began is of no use to me, and I do not believe the Universe will suffer it to continue. For ten years I have seen the Empire going heavily and dully about its business; I have seen it made an excuse for much meanness and clumsy violence. It suffers in credit and direction by the hard "loyalty" of stupid adherents and stupid representatives who do not understand how gracious and mighty a civilizing organization it could be. They control it and they cripple it. It carries a vast crowd of parasites who snatch monopolies and profits in its name. It has lost moral prestige in Ireland, in India, in China, and before all the world. Enormously. Perhaps even fatally. To-day, what is it doing? Officially, I mean. Is it showing any intelligent sympathy for the efforts of the more progressive Chinese to found a modern State amid the ruins of the antiquated Manchu system, or is it just bullying and blustering in the confusion? Is it displaying the slightest generosity to the struggles of its fallen and shattered ally and helper, Russia, to reconstruct its economic life? Is it building up a free and friendly modern India? In the

past it did great things for Japan, and it gave unity and freedom to and won the fellowship of Canada and South Africa. Is it doing anything to compare with these former feats to-day? Why is it engaging in a childish wrangle with the equally reprehensible Government of the United States about which is to have the biggest navy? For what on earth are these navies wanted now? It is improving its tanks, I gather; is it improving its educational machinery? What is it doing with its manhood? What chance has a boy of distinguished gifts born son of a miner under the shadow of the Duke of Northumberland?

How much of its tremendous resources is at the disposal of scientific research? In the measure of the available wealth and man-power, which is doing the most for scientific work to-day—Moscow or London? Has the British Empire made, indeed, one fine, great, and ennobling gesture towards the future unity of mankind for the past ten years? Wembley! Rodeos and military tattoos! Immeasurable things could be done with the vast opportunity of the British Empire, but are they being even attempted?

I put these questions to myself, and I put them to the reader.

It would be all too easy to fly off into an attitude of anti-Imperialism, and say with the Communists, "These Imperialisms are evil things; let us destroy them." But they are not inherently evil things. To destroy Imperial systems with nothing to replace them is simply to leap backward because one is not

going forward fast enough. The British Empire is not a thing to destroy; it is a thing to rescue. But the time for rescue is now—and the need is urgent. It has to be rescued from the arrogant flag-worshipping class and from the tariff-monopoly adventurers who at present are in control. It has to be saved from its "patriots" and its "patriot" Government. We have seen the great civilized States of Central Europe humiliated and brought to disaster by just that same combination of exasperating militarism with industrial nationalism that now imperils Great Britain. Are we in our turn to tread that path? We want the Empire of the open hand. We want an Empire which is not an end but a means.

*18 September, 1927.*

# XI

## THE PRESENT USELESSNESS AND DANGER OF AEROPLANES. A PROBLEM IN ORGANIZATION

In this world of great and irregular change, in this Western civilization which is gradually becoming world-wide, men and women are living longer, more healthily, and more abundantly than they have ever done before. But in many respects they seem to be living much less abundantly than they could do. One of the most remarkable facts in our present astonishing spectacle of life is the now quite considerable accumulation of life-enlarging inventions that, so far as the generality goes, are being put to no use at all or to extremely limited and unsatisfactory uses.

These things wait. Or, like the excessive birthday presents of a spoilt child, some are partially unpacked and put aside for future consideration. And some have been broken. Science and invention have given these things to that spoilt child, the ordinary man of to-day. He has still to learn the full benefit of them.

The most striking of these ill-appreciated gifts is flying. For the last ten years at least safe, swift, delightful air travel round about this entrancingly

bright and various planet of ours has been available for mankind at considerably less than the cost of ordinary first-class rail or steamship travel. When I write "available for mankind," I do not mean that it is available for the reader or myself. I mean that if mankind had been able to take it up, it would have been available for us and all other individuals willing to pay the charges, charges so low that almost any well-paid worker would have had a reasonable use of this means of transport at his command. And when I say safe, I mean safer than ordinary travel by rail or ship; and by swift I mean travelling at something like a hundred miles an hour, and by delightful—smooth, beautiful, and in the sweetest air. I have flown fairly often. I know what I am writing about, I know the happiness and wonder of flying, and I know that its present rarity, danger, and unattractiveness are not due to any defects in the aeroplane or airship itself—physical science and mechanical invention have failed at no point in the matter—but mainly, almost entirely, to the financial, administrative, and political difficulties of aviation.

The business and administrative side is not up to the mechanical side; it is so plainly and unenterprisingly behind that I, for example, am beginning to despair altogether of my once confident hope of flying very agreeably round the world before I die. I have a nostalgia for the coloured gorges of South Algeria, for the Great Wall of China, for the scorched jungles of India, and the palaces of Ambar, and if I had my

rights as a civilized man I should be able to fly down over them all in a handful of days. Never shall I set eyes on them.

I have flown fairly often but I fly no longer. I find it too uncomfortable, irregular, and stupidly dangerous. In the old days flying was a novel experience; one flew for the fun of the thing, and there was no objection whatever to an element of danger in the affair. In the experimental days one had no more right to complain of danger in an aeroplane than in big-game hunting. And it was fair to make one wait for a favourable day and a good machine. But those sporting days are past. It is one thing to get killed in a hopeful and daring experiment on the edge of things known, and quite another to be drowned or smashed or roasted to death on an omnibus route because a certain number of able but restricted gentlemen in control of the business have—with all sorts of excellent excuses for doing so—sent one off in an overworked, perfunctorily inspected, or overloaded machine. I have seen enough of European flying services not to wish to see any more of them until the whole thing is under "entirely new management."

Nearly every one of the series of horrible accidents that have so powerfully retarded the expansion of European passenger air travel was a foretellable disaster. Sooner or later these tragedies were inevitable under current conditions. I have crossed the Channel at about two thousand feet with both engines popping away dismally, and got to Lympne by a miracle, and

the only thing that astonished me when at last one of these things flopped into the water was that no one was drowned. Hardly more than half of the passenger flights I have made got through according to schedule, and I suppose I have spent almost as many hours at LeBourget and Lympne and Amsterdam and Prague—and Heaven knows which is the least attractive promenade!—waiting about for machines that did not turn up or could not be put right, as I have in the air. I do not complain of delays due to bad weather. What has most wasted my time and endangered my life, in my attempts to be an up-to-date traveller, has been that there were not enough machines and pilots to run the service properly and safely.

Never in any case of forced landing have I known a fresh machine appear to take on the passengers—only last month I saw that twelve dismal passengers were landed in the wilderness of Puckeridge, in Kent, to get to London by train at God knows what hour of the evening—and only at Prague have I ever observed a number of reserve machines having a reasonable rest and overhaul.

Now I am not reflecting here on the personal capacity and honesty of any of the people concerned with the European air services. I live quite outside the feuds and competitions, ambitions and disappointments of that queer world. Whenever I state such facts as these, plain and simple and easily verifiable, about the European air services, the air press be-

comes extremely heated and defensively rude about it—but the facts remain facts. For ten years Europe has been pottering, dangerously and ineffectively, with this glorious possibility of air transport about the globe, and it seems no nearer to its realization to-day than it was in 1919. And the reason for this, I submit, is because the old world cannot produce a financial and administrative organization of a sufficient largeness, power, and scope to handle the thing effectively.

It needs only common knowledge and a few grains of common sense to realize that the exploitation of the air, as a means of safe, happy, and generally available travel, is hopeless without the expenditure of capital on the scale of, say, fifteen million pounds, plus secure wayleaves over Europe and most of Asia and Africa. On that scale it would be the most obviously easy and profitable of undertakings. On that scale a number of main routes could be prepared and lit between all the chief cities from Dublin, Lisbon, and Stockholm to Vladivostok and Capetown, and a sufficient supply of machines and a sufficiently big organization could be developed to ensure that, except during very unfavourable phases of the weather, a machine, a pilot, and an assistant in perfect condition would be ready to start as passengers accumulated during certain hours of departure specified for each aerodrome, with still plentiful machines in reserve. Then the travelling public would know what to expect.

One could put together one's valise in the morning

in London, and dine and hear some music in Munich, spend a second pleasant evening in the Crimea after a day above the Danube, and so over the Taurus to Bagdad, and into the sunshine of India by the fourth or fifth evening. Once people were sure of the services they would begin to flow steadily along the established routes. Their numbers and the seasons of their coming would become more and more calculable; with that the fares would fall and the passengers multiply. Air services can be far more elastic things than train services. It is a most intricate thing to rearrange trans-continental expresses, but an air service can turn over its machines from one air route to another as occasion requires with an ease impossible to any other form of transport. If it have enough; if it is on that scale. In a few years the international air service would represent not millions, but thousands of millions, of capital value, and would be sustaining a vast industry beside which the motor-car industry of the world would seem a small affair. But the business cannot get started unless it starts with assurance and security. And that means an initial effort quite beyond the futile pottering of to-day. All the world at present cannot get together into one united effort enough capital to give aviation that start.

So it doesn't start. It doesn't get on. It seems highly probable that twenty years hence we shall be muckering about with air travel very much as we are doing to-day. It will be as fitful, unpunctual, and

uncertain. The tale of needless air tragedies will have lengthened. A great majority of air passengers will still be in the air as a rather daring "experience" for the first and last time.

Let me repeat that I am not criticizing the galaxy of brilliant, energetic, and enterprising people who are the magnates of the air world to-day. I do not suggest that any one could, under these conditions, do better than they are doing. In what may prove, I fear, a vain effort to propitiate the air press, I am prepared to concede that they are all without invidious exceptions quite marvellous people. What I am saying here reflects upon their peerlessness hardly at all. I am calling attention to the net in which their great abilities seem to be caught, and the barriers set to their benefactions. If a shadow of blame creeps into my comments, it is that with a modest gallantry they make what they can out of a necessarily cramped business, and do not complain loudly and vehemently enough against these things that prevent them year after year from opening up those world airways that would lead to a more united and happier life for mankind.

The crux of the business lies in the comparative under-development of the financial and business and political worlds in respect to the vast expansion of mechanical and economic possibility. We talk a lot of nonsense nowadays about Big Business. There is really no Big Business in the world to-day. No busi-

ness big enough. There are a number of banking and industrial combinations in existence much larger than any that preceded them, and the fact that they are larger than their predecessors blinds us to the fact that they are not large enough for their jobs. Shipping, the world trade in many staple products, cry aloud for unification also—but for the present let us stick to this simple case of the air. Business is entangled with finance, finance with politics, and when we begin to look into this riddle of why that fifty million pounds trust does not appear, secure its concessions and its wayleaves, and get to work upon a real world air service, we discover, as a first effectual barrier, national boundaries. We find every single country of the European patchwork messing about dwarfishly with its own "national" aviation and placing every possible impediment in the way of "foreign" air development.

Now effective air travel has to be internationalized from the start. The aeroplane makes leaps of three or four hundred miles, and there is hardly any sense in going up in a machine—in Europe, at least—unless you mean to come down in another country. It is as sensible to hope for an air transport system developed on national lines as it would be to hope for an interoceanic railway system through the coalescence of mile and half-mile of bits of line built, each at its own sweet will, to its own design and gauge, by every village and township en route. Here I will not

rouse the deep and passionate emotions of patriotism in the reader by any general condemnation of national partisanship, but from the point of view of air development, merely and solely, nationalism is an unmitigated nuisance.

At present the only areas of the world's surface capable of being brought under one control for air exploitation are firstly the European and Asiatic areas under Soviet government, alliance, or influence; secondly, the United States of America and their continent; and, thirdly, the territories, protectorates, allies, and dependents of the British Empire east and south of Palestine—as far as Malaya, Australia, and the Cape. The development of Soviet flying is retarded by comparative poverty and the underdevelopment of the huge region concerned; the United States is a railway-made unity, with admirably organized rail transport and powerful railway influences for air services to fight, and with none of the separating channels, inland seas, and so forth that make flying so desirable in the western part of the Old World; while, as for the third great flying area, the steamship-created British Empire, it is, aerially speaking, decapitated. You cannot fly from the British Isles to the vast dominions round and about the Indian Ocean without infringing foreign territory. I see no hope that any one of these three areas, so handicapped, will be able to initiate practicable air services for general use, and still less can I see any hope of our existing sovereign powers going so far as

to coalesce for air development with their neighbours. That would involve a reversal of the entire drift of nationalist feeling.

But, given such a miracle, given for example a pooling of German and Russian and Chinese air interests, backbone lines could be created from the North Sea to the Pacific and to Peking and Anatolia, to which every other air line in the Old World would be compelled to articulate. But even if one supposes a sufficient liberality of the principals to make such an enterprise practicable, it is difficult to imagine the Foreign Offices and the War Offices of the rest of the "Powers" permitting such a Germano-Russian-Chinese system to develop without a great war. For if they did not make a great war of it they would presently have to go out of business.

These are my reasons for doubting if men will be able to use the gift and glory of flying, fully and abundantly, for very many years to come. We shall crawl because we are old-fashioned patriots instead of flying as some day good cosmopolitans will. But the reaction of our time-honoured and beloved political institutions upon flying is not merely negative. We do not just go without this beautiful thing. Our patriotic passions demand something more positive than that. Our flags demand, not only abstinences, but blood and burnt offerings. If, on the one hand, the custodians of our national distinctness block the development of safe flying, they do, on the other hand, work with considerable vigour to develop dangerous

flying. However much air transport may limp and lag, there is no cessation of research, within the limits of the military intelligence, into the possibilities of war aviation.

In the year 1926, a year of profound peace, technically speaking, the English R.A.F. killed eighty-three young men. The numbers killed show a considerable advance upon 1925. France, Italy, America show comparable losses. Germany, lucky land, does not appear in this massacre. She is forbidden to kill her young aviators in spite of all patriotic cravings to do so; she is devoting them therefore to an air transport service that in spite of many handicaps is already the best in Europe. Since the Great Peace, while you and I have been going about our various little concerns, some thousands of young men, not common young men, but picked human beings, exceptionally courageous and well bred and well made, have been dashed to pieces and burnt alive, to the end that when presently the nations have sufficiently forgotten the last war to be guided into the next, flying shall not fail in its contribution to the spectacle. These splendid young men have been killed, just as the carefully chosen youths of the Aztec nation were killed, to propitiate the national gods. Even in peace-time these sacred monsters had to be kept alive by the blood of the young. These gallant youngsters have been learning to fly in hazardous ways, or they have been practising the throwing of explosive bombs and poison bombs at the imaginary homes and refuges of

offending foreigners below, and they have paid the penalty. Very great advances, we are assured, are being made every year in the destructiveness, deadliness, and general disgustingness of the air offensive at the price of these deaths.

There is no need to elaborate this monstrous contrast further. What has been said is sufficient to establish the thesis that for a century human affairs have been developing at an unequal pace, that while our economic and political ideas and methods have made only sluggish and insecure advances, mechanical science has so progressed as entirely to outscale them. This instance of the air is only one vivid instance of what is happening to most of the economic and industrial affairs of mankind. Governments are not helping, not fostering, the huge and desirable reorganizations that are possible. Politicians live by keeping alive feuds and hatreds. Governments subsist upon old sentiments and traditions; there is no such thing as a progressive creative Government in the world anywhere, to accept and use in a full and proper fashion the gifts science and invention now hold out to us. The chief recognition of progress by Governments everywhere takes the form of attempts to turn the gifts of progress into weapons to kill progress. And the chief riddle before mankind on its way to that world peace, that larger, happier, nobler, and fuller life which certainly awaits it, is the riddle of how to introduce into its methods of government that idea of progress, which has given us the key

to these vast treasures, and so convert the nationalist parochialisms of to-day, stage by stage and surely and conclusively, into the world commonweal, which is the essential condition of their exploitation.

*20 February, 1927.*

## XII

### CHANGES IN THE ARTS OF WAR. ARE ARMIES NEEDED ANY LONGER? THE TWILIGHT OF THE GUARDS

I HAVE never abused the Senate of the United States.

No sign of gratitude have I ever had from any of these ninety-six gentlemen for this extraordinary treatment. Extraordinary it is. Everybody except myself abuses the Senate. It turned down American participation in the League of Nations, to the edification of all mankind. It prevents the United States tangling itself up in treaties, understandings, and complications of the balance-of-power description. It makes the United States "different" in the world of international affairs. America's representatives abroad never represent her. What the President signs to-day the Senate revokes to-morrow. The New World would not be half such a fresh world if it were not for the Senate.

Lately the scolding of the Senate has broken out with revived bitterness. At Geneva somebody from America agreed to a treaty against the use of poison gas in warfare, a very silly and mischievous treaty from any points of view. The Senate cast it out.

Embittered idealists declare that this is due to "lobbying" by the American chemical industries. Why the American chemical industries should not lobby upon a question of this sort passes my comprehension. They know about it. Why should all the arrangements for the warfare of the future be left to the gold-laced gentlemen who pose as naval and military experts? The Senate has saved poison gas for warfare. I hope the Senate will continue to stand for every sort of disagreeable novelty in warfare. I hope the Senate will save disease germs for warfare and make a stand about poisoning the water supply. Let war be war and not merely a tedious cruel game under rules. The more various, open, perplexing, and unpleasant the available methods of warfare are to professional soldiers, the less likely the world is to get another large and deliberate war.

Let us consider how fresh wars are most likely to arise, and what classes of people lean most heavily towards war. There can be little dispute that the enormous majority of human beings nowadays hates and dreads the idea of war; that most financial interests have become chary of using its possibility as a threat in the game of wealth acquisition; and that industrialism and trade contemplate an extensive outbreak as unalloyed disaster. Little bullying punitive wars against small and uncivilized peoples may still appeal to powerful groups exploiting natural resources, but even these minor affairs seem to evoke a greater distaste than they used to do. The war-

makers who are trying to force Britain into hostilities with China and the United States into a Mexican adventure are meeting with an extremely stiff opposition. Half a century ago, both adventures would have gone with a click.

The minority which favours war is very largely the professionally belligerent class officers, their womenkind, and every sort of person who upon occasion wears uniform and a sword and is entitled to a salute. Salutes are ten times more intoxicating than absolute alcohol. They reassure the arrogant; they allay all doubts. This salutable minority is very strongly entrenched in the political traditions and misconceptions of mankind. It has an air of being in the scheme of things. Its heads are highly placed. And it is picturesque. It photographs easily and is, by that alone, assured of a steady newspaper publicity. It commands a great supply of bands. It is the custodian of the flag. The facts that it may be dangerous and useless weigh but lightly in the common mind against such attractions.

One may doubt if the generality of adorned and salutable soldiers in the world really want war. They want the possibility of war, of course, the world parcelled up into competing nations, and so forth, because otherwise they could have no professional careers, no inferiors to salute them, and might at any time be retrenched out of existence. They have to "defend" us against the soldiers next door, and the soldiers next door have to "defend" the other fellows

against our team, and there you are. That is primary. But war itself one may doubt their hunger for, and quite evidently war to the utmost is not to the professional soldiers' taste.

It is part of the general absurdity with which human affairs are at present conducted that when we want a discussion of disarmament or the mitigation and prevention of war we consult "naval and military experts," existing by and for professional war, and quite naturally they advise us on strictly professional lines. They set their faces against all disturbing novelties that would oblige them to learn their trade anew or against any proposals that might abolish their profession, and they do their best to make warfare honourable, comfortable, and dignified for military gentlemen. This, as people say, is only human nature. They want *nice* wars. They will provide the spectacle, they will face the more sportsmanlike toils and dangers of the entertainment, and the taxpayers, the civilians, and the common herd, the "men," will bear the less agreeable part of the burthen and stand the racket of the subsequent clearing-up.

These charges are sustained by the proceedings of the experts who have been discussing "disarmament" at Geneva under the auspices of the League—as one might call it—for the Preservation of Distinct Nations and Established Boundaries for Ever. The whole tenor of their activities is to retain war as a standing institution, by restricting its expensiveness and keeping its horrors within the bounds of human

endurance. Aeroplanes are to be defined as war aeroplanes (to be used) and peace aeroplanes (not to be used). Navies are to be restricted to so many battleships a side. Unsportsmanlike tools and particularly submarines are to be forbidden. Professional soldiers found killed by poker blows or poisoned food or other illegitimate means are to be restored to life by the League of Nations umpires. Nations found playing more soldiers than are allowed by the rules will be disqualified. Such, at least, is the spirit of these entertaining researches, though the complete scheme has still to be produced. So protected, there is no reason why the professional soldier, dressed in full uniform, from spurs to feathers, and the professional sea-dog in blue and gold lace should not strut about the world, "defending" us all, to the very end of time.

The virtuous proposals of President Coolidge for further naval agreement are open to precisely the same objection as these Geneva schemes. They would bar invention. They would professionalize and trade unionize war. Except as paymaster and victim they would eliminate the civilian.

My friend, Mr. J. B. S. Haldane, has called this disposition of the military authorities to give a pleasant and honourable quality to war, "Bayardism," because the Chevalier Bayard, that peerless knight, felt such a funk and detestation of gunpowder that he put every musketeer who fell into his hands to death. Donne, on the other hand, says Brigadier-

General Hartley—who is really not such a soldier as that sounds, seeing that he is a Fellow of the Royal Society and a distinguished chemist—preaching in St. Paul's Cathedral in 1621, thanked God for artillery because it brought wars to a quicker end. Mr. Haldane has written one of the most instructive and well-informed books about Chemical Warfare that exist; he knows about ten times as much in this field as most of the worthy gentlemen in gold lace, tabs, badges, labels, swords, belts, and suchlike adornments who would in practice have to mismanage it, and his brains are certainly ten times as good. Consequently his book, which gives away every point of importance concerning gas warfare, is treated as light literature, and the real professional soldiers will torture and kill scores of thousands of conscripts before they learn, horribly and slowly, what he so charmingly tells them in his little volume.

Just as in the Great War—when in 1914 the French and British soldiers were a quarter of a century behind-hand with trench warfare, and not a military expert in Europe would attempt the tank until 1916, although its use and necessity as a solution of the trench blockade had been quite lucidly discussed and set forth by civilians as early as 1903. Brigadier-General Hartley still returns at times to read papers about gas warfare to the army folk he supplemented so effectively during the war, though no one supposes they want to take him seriously now. He has made it clear that a country in which everybody, man,

woman, and child, has a specially efficient gas-mask handy may face the next great war with a certain qualified equanimity, and his anxiety about the gas discipline of troops trained since 1918 is only too manifest in all he says and does in this connection. Meanwhile at the Royal College of Science in London, young engineers and chemists are beguiled away from their studies in order to learn saluting and flourishing about with swords, bayonets, and battle axes in a Cadet corps.

At present the British Army, which is perhaps the liveliest, most industrious technically, and, according to its lights, the most nearly up-to-date of all the old armies now surviving in the world, is working out methods of fighting that are not much more than twenty years behind the level of contemporary thought and intelligence. Having resisted the tank for twelve years, having muffed the tank outrageously in the war, the British Army is now evidently quite enslaved by the tank. It plays with tanks all day and dreams of them at nights. It exhibits them with childish pride to Colonial Premiers and Indian princes. It has dinky one-man tanks now and great big land battleships and transport tanks and shock tanks. Cavalry is at last at a discount, and the Air Force practises deadly stunts and does musical drill at pageants very prettily. Perhaps a new generation of military men, accustomed in their younger days to driving motor-cars to the public danger, is responsible for this change of heart, this sudden glorification of

the once-hated tank. But it is to be hoped for the sake of England and all the world that these exercises will never get beyond the gravity of an expensive amusement for the British military authorities.

Because, quite apart from the aeroplane gas attack, which is the really modern mode of warfare, if warfare we must have, there are a score of ways of countering a tank rush. This tank rush of which the British Army seems to be dreaming now is as out of date as those vast cavalry charges the German Emperor loved to rehearse before 1914. There are pitfalls, there are trailing land torpedoes, gas-poisoned belts, and zones of sudden flame that would make tanks mere cooking-pots. A committee of half a dozen alert and intelligent specialists of the type of Mr. Haldane and General Hartley, men who have given their minds to biology, chemistry, mechanics, and suchlike sensible pursuits instead of mere soldiering, could work out twenty schemes to make tanks impossible in a month or so. The tank may have been all very well in 1907 or thereabouts; 1914 was the time for it. It was the winning card in the days when Lord Kitchener turned it down as a "mechanical toy." Now the only excuse for thinking of it at all is that the professional soldiers against whom the British professionals will be pitted will probably be even more backward and unintelligent than they are. Given a war on the basis of "Back to 1903," and all may be well with England.

There is nowadays, however, much more danger

than there ever was before that some strange new outcast country, Soviet Russia, for example, with German science to help her—or even with her own sedulously stimulated science—will refuse to play the recognized soldiers' game according to the rules, and resort directly to chemists, biologists, and engineers for some entirely unchivalrous way of destroying a military force. Suppose this eccentric outcast to concentrate on that. It would need to have a good supply of aviators and aeroplanes, but no man has ever yet discovered how to prevent the instantaneous conversion of a civil aeroplane into a military one; and also it would have to have access to great chemical works. But given these things, and men to operate them, that enemy need not have ten thousand soldiers in uniform. It could hold up the huge tank rush by a few simple expedients of the type I have glanced at above, and it could set about locating, chasing, and annihilating every sort of general headquarters and political and directive centre of the orthodox military people—with gas and germs.

The idea would be to tarnish, suffocate, blister, and burn the gentlemen in gold lace, and their political associates behind them, to the pitch of entire disorganization. There would be no necessity to pester the general enemy population except in regions of chemical industrialism. That eminent air-archæologist, Mr. O. G. S. Crawford, can teach any ground soldier who cares to learn how difficult, how almost impossible it would be, to conceal the lay-out of vital

military centres from an acute air observer. Still less easy would it be to conceal plant for the accumulation and distribution of munitions. In a little while the front-line trenches would be telephoning to deaf ears, and the tanks of the great offensive, until their petrol was all used up, would be wandering back like sheep without a shepherd.

That sort of thing, a defensive trench and tank-trap system, and an air and gas offensive against vital spots, is the really contemporary form of war—if we must have war. That is the best way of achieving disaster for the other side. It is, from first to last, a job for technicians and artisans. There is no more use for drilled troops in it than there is for the Greek phalanx. The military experts as a class loathe and detest the new methods, and will do everything they can to set up a flimsy barrier of treaties against their use, for the simple reason that they abolish the military class. The whole world owes a debt of gratitude to the American Senate for thwarting their endeavours.

It may seem paradoxical at first, but it is not nearly as paradoxical as it sounds, to say that the evolution of war is abolishing the soldier altogether. Suppose we drop considering whether war is out of date or whether it pays, and assume that it is still a current concern. It does not follow in the least that we still want soldiers to wage it. I am inclined to think that on most scores we do not. If we were not so profoundly obsessed by tradition and romance, I think

we should come to see that now, even for the direct purposes of war, for the defence of a state from intruders, for the destruction of peoples and institutions that have aroused our animosity to the murder pitch, and for the imposition of some national or imperial will on recalcitrant populations, all these handsome individuals running about or galloping about in tabs and buttons and gold lace are of no earthly use at all. We keep them because we are creatures of habit and wont. We endure them because we have still to realize how unnecessary they are. But the soldier in uniform is as out of date to-day as the man in armour was in 1600.

Drill, uniform, salutes, and the segregation of soldiers from most human interests and all mental stimuli in barracks and camps have always been so deeply impressed upon our minds as the proper way of war, that it is only nowadays that this question becomes debatable. Few of us realize how much of the old soldiering is already superseded. Flags have long since disappeared from the modern battlefield. To-day they wave chiefly for public occasions, at political meetings, and in the advertisements of goods not otherwise attractive. Military bands leave their instruments at home, or take them only as far as the base, and the common soldier is deprived of all his conspicuous regimental characters and clapped into a severely practical outfit directly fighting begins. But we still think that the disciplines and recognizable uniforms demanded by the mass fighting of de-

parted conditions are somehow imperative if war is to continue. We have not yet made full allowance for the fact that while victory in the past was generally conceded to rigidity, obstinacy, and a blind obedience, it is now more and more the reward of flexibility, knowledge, invention, and a witty use of modern resources. It is the country that has the courage to scrap its army most completely which may come nearest winning in the next great war—if human foolishness does contrive another great war and a final delirium.

But while the abandonment of an army as the instrument of warfare and the handing over the business of defensive and offensive killing as a special problem to chemists, biologists, and engineers would probably increase the military efficiency of a country very greatly, it would also greatly diminish its disposition for war. The man of science and organizing ability would be much more likely to regard war as a tiresome distraction than as a great and glorious opportunity. The needs and ambitions of the uniform-wearing classes would cease to be a power in the land because they would cease to be in the land. They would have dropped out altogether in favour of the Haldanes and Hartleys and practical people of that kind, who would probably prefer to work in laboratory overalls.

To me it seems almost certain that neither the war of 1870 nor the Great War would have occurred if France and Germany had remained republics after

1848. France succumbed to Napoleon III, who was nothing if not Napoleonic. Germany after 1870 set out to be a great modern state, and she found herself fatally entangled with a dynasty whose chief interest in life was to exhibit itself in belligerent costumes and attitudes. Each of the countries, when it reverted to monarchy, broke out into a vivid rash of uniforms, and after that the disease had to run its course. German militarism was not a necessity to an expanding Germany; it was a reversion that wrecked an expanding Germany. Germany to-day is much more likely to take a great place in a united Europe than she ever was before, because of the wholesome surgery that has been done upon her. She has had her Hohenzollerns removed. Her state of health will be displayed and judged by the disappearance of uniforms from her complexion.

Several European countries, in spite of the monstrous futile victories and ineffective defeats of the Great War, are still gravely infected by these antiquated armies and their traditions and sentimentalities. But in view of what has been advanced in this article, it is quite possible that the free advancement of belligerent science may be the true way to achieve the peace of mankind. The improvement of war may be synonymous with the ending of war.

*6 March, 1927.*

# XIII

## DELUSIONS ABOUT WORLD PEACE. THE PRICE OF PEACE

Let us assume that a great number of people in the world want peace, permanent world peace. We have to assume this because there is no way of proving it, and it is open to very considerable doubt. But it is a prevalent habit to assert as much. If it is true, then there is amazingly little effort to realize this aspiration. Those people who want permanent world peace carry inaggressiveness too far. Nowhere in the world do I find any evidence of a real, strenuous effort to establish the peace of the world on sure foundations. Nowhere do I find really clear-headed, resolute efforts on a scale commensurate to the task to restrain the processes that will inevitably develop into warfare in the not very remote future.

Many readers will no doubt rebel against this statement. They will point to the League of Nations, League of Nations Unions and Societies, innumerable declarations by prominent people, "No More War" organizations, and so forth and so on. I admit a prevalent sentimentality in the matter. I can even believe that if the peace of the world could be secured for ever by a show of hands, there would be a consider-

able majority in its favour. I am convinced, too, that wars in the future, even at the outset, will not be undertaken with the gusto with which we all set about the Great War. But if a man has an idiot incendiary in his house, it is no good for him to go about saying, "No more fire," unless he has the matches locked up, the fires guarded, and the idiot watched. Since 1914, in spite of vast volumes of pious intention, hardly anything of practical value has been done to prevent future wars.

Peace talk bores many people. And it is interesting to note that it bores them. Among the hundreds of thousands who will glance over this article there are thousands, especially among the younger contingent, who will probably be killed or maimed in war. The present reader has a fairly good chance of having some of his face blown out at the back of his head, or his hips smashed to splinters, or his viscera dispersed rather painfully, or some such surprising experience—it always seems to surprise them—by one of the missiles that will be flying about in great abundance when the next fighting is under way. It is a touching manifestation of the careless bravery of our race that this probability does not seem to move them to any appreciable effort to avert such a culmination of their careers. Until it happens they seem rather to enjoy the prospect, and after it has happened their opinion loses any weight in the matter.

Still more of my readers will be maimed or impoverished, and wasted by the coming war, but they

never seem to think they will draw bad numbers until they get them, and after they have got them, like the fox that lost its tail, the common reaction seems to be a more or less conscious desire to see the experience spread to those still intact. And for most women and girls war is as good as a richly sentimental film that moves them to tears and pity. While it converts great multitudes of men into a muddy mixture of rags of flesh and uniform, it greatly enhances the economic importance of women and their value as nurses, war wives, and the inspirers of heroic sacrifices. The feminine disapproval of war is an outward and visible gentleness that is entirely compatible with a very considerable readiness to face it bravely and to discourage effective efforts to prevent it. This widespread objection to war of which we hear so much does not go very deep into people's hearts; it certainly does not stir them as religious hatred or unfamiliar customs can stir them, and it is a complete delusion to regard it as in itself an operative cause preventing war.

One real test of pacifist sincerity is to be found in the pose towards national independence. To any one who will sit down for five minutes and face the facts squarely it must be evident that the organization of world peace, so that wars will be impossible and disarmament secure, involves some sort of federal authority in the world's affairs. At some point there must be the certainty of a decision upon all disputes of races and peoples and nations that would otherwise

necessitate war. And this authority must clearly have the power to enforce its decisions. Whatever navies and armies survive, other than police forces for local and definite ends, must be under the control of this central authority. It may be a committee of national representatives or what you will, but central authority there must be. Pax Mundi, like the Pax Romana or the Pax Britannica, must be the only sovereign power within its realm. If you are not prepared to see your own country and your own flag so far subordinated to collective control, whatever protestations of peaceful intentions you make are either made unintelligently or else in bad faith. Your country cannot be both independent and restricted. Either you are for Cosmopolis or you are for war.

It is interesting to note how many excellent people boggle at this obvious alternative. They declare they are for peace, first, last, and all the time; they belong to this or that association for universal arbitration or for propaganda on behalf of the League of Nations, they advocate disarmament, and all the while they shirk the plain logical consequences of these pretensions, which are, in one word, *disloyalty* to their own government. The idea of loyalty is unquèstioning obedience, complete devotion; "our country, right or wrong." We abandon easy and natural poses and stiffen up to a mechanical salute at the first note of the national anthem. By that we indicate that, before all other things, and even to the sacrifice of our lives, we are prepared to serve, support, and sustain the

free and separate existence, alleged collective prosperity, natural destiny, necessary expansion, honour, and glory of our own sovereign government, its Empire and its subjects, against right, reason, justice, the knavish tricks of foreigners (and practically that is all foreigners are supposed to do), the stars in their courses, or the welfare of mankind. We put our nationality first in our hearts and souls and lives. We regard *our* country as something primary and eternal. We must never think of it subordinated nor imagine that its separateness can end. It is to go on for all time just as it is, only more so. The rest of the world may go to the devil. If patriotism is not all that, then what is patriotism?

Now, I maintain that in this matter you cannot run with the hare and hunt with the hounds. You cannot be an advocate of organized world peace and a full and complete patriot also. A great number of worthy people are trying to achieve this impossibility. If we subtract them from the total of those who are "working for world peace," I doubt if any large number of people remain. The patriotic attitude seems to be a much more natural and satisfactory one than the cosmopolitan. It is much easier to adhere to a government that exists than to get at cross-purposes with all the honour and procedure of your own country in order to work for one that does not and never may exist. Patriotism is rich with associations; it is romantic and poetic. It is always nice and strengthening to hate and despise something, and patriotism

gives you the whole outer world for that sustaining use. Its chief drawback is that it takes you along roads that end sooner or later in war, and that, in spite of the professional soldiers, war becomes more frightful, disgusting, destructive, and futile every year. And another drawback is that it restricts your movements to your own dear country, and that on the rest of this small planet you must travel about as a latent enemy and a potential spy.

Nor do the logical consequences of a desire for world peace end with the sacrifice of complete national freedom in the matter of disarmament and in diplomatic action. These concern merely the material and forms of war. The underlying cause of most recent wars seems to be the treatment of each sovereign community as a separate economic system in hostile competition with all the rest, and the consequent struggle to secure priority in markets and exclusive or privileged access to supplies of raw material. Arrangements for disarmament and arbitration may delay conflicts and render warfare clumsier and more sluggish, exhausting, and painful, but they will do little or nothing to prevent the ultimate resort to war, so long as we are living under the assumption that there is a struggle for existence, an unavoidable competition for vital material, between sovereign states. Unless people are prepared to accept the idea that the economic life of the world can be regarded and controlled as one system to the general advantage of the race, their aspirations for a universal

peace will remain the most unreal of all possible aspirations. Separate economic systems *must* compete, *must* jostle, *must* forestall, and *must* drive, for all their virtuous protestations, towards a tussle.

No doubt the reorganization of the world's affairs and the world's ideas to the form of an economic unity is a gigantic task. But it is not a bit of good preparing palm branches and hosannahs for the final pacification of mankind unless we believe and intend that that gigantic task will and shall be done.

When some central body determines the distribution of raw material and staple commodities throughout the world, when these movements are lubricated by transactions in a common currency, then, and only then, is a stable world peace a reasonable proposition.

And it is not only trade and business that have to be brought to the scale of world affairs, but the movements of population demand a similar unified control. We have to remember that the idea of world peace runs counter to the general processes of nature. Nature's way with species seems always to have been multiplication up to the limits of subsistence and a consequent struggle to survive. This has not always produced happy or dignified results; the hyena, the wart-hog, thousands of species of parasites that seem very cruel, hideous, and vile to us, have been brought to their present state of survival efficiency by this struggle. War, both internecine and external, is nature's way. But we are told by the moving spirits of

what is called the birth-control movement that mankind need be driven no longer by population pressure. If they are right in saying that, then world peace is possible. If they are wrong it is not. If they are wrong, then the Italians and Japanese are justified in breeding like rabbits, clamouring to grab land from more restrained populations, and threatening war. If they are wrong, there is an exuse for the Italian threats against the French, and for the Japanese claims to a foothold in Australia and California. But if their increase is a preventable increase due to the sinful ignorance fostered by a repressive Government, then those "expansion"-seeking people cease to appear as heroic aggressors and become instead merely philoprogenitive nuisances in the commonweal of mankind. Apparently birth-rates fall as knowledge increases; the lower the standard of life, the greater the breeding. It is clear that unless there is a common protection of knowledge and information throughout the world, this biological suffocation of peace possibilities must continue. Civilization will remain restricted by the militant protective necessities imposed upon it by such slum-breeding regions as Fascist Italy, Japan, and Bengal. The space-consuming communities must arm against them. So here again we see a clear incompatibility between any hope of world peace and the sovereign freedom of individual states.

I suppose that this article is what amiable supporters of the dear League of Nations at Geneva will

call a "pessimistic" article. It is not in the least pessimistic, but it does attempt to indicate something of the scale and quality of the task if peace is indeed to be established for ever in the world. The Anglo-Saxon community in particular suffers from a delusion that afternoon meetings (with tea), small regular subscriptions to societies with noble intentions, the circulation of nicely printed reports, and a polite and deferential attitude towards all that is respected and influential in life, may be considered not merely as progressive activities, but as all that is required in the way of progressive activities. This job calls for something much rougher and more fundamental. I do not see how we can avoid the conclusion that the search for world peace, since it is a project to subordinate our sovereign government to something larger, comes near to or passes the legal definition of treason. Moreover, the necessary conditions for world peace bring us into sharp conflict, not simply with the ordinary patriot but with much that is regarded by large sections of people as current morality. And, as a further obstacle, such views must necessarily antagonize big interests entrenched behind tariff walls and currency advantages. A real world peace movement must be a revolutionary movement in politics, finance, industrialism, and the daily life alike. It is not a proposed change in certain formal aspects of life; it is a proposal to change the whole of life. People are allowed to go about talking of world peace now, not because their views are regarded as

acceptable, but because they are supposed to be incoherent and ineffective. As the conditions of world peace are made plainer and as the movement for world peace becomes more distinctly practicable, that present tolerance is unlikely to continue. The first phase when any creative movement passes from the realm of mere talk towards realization is resistance and persecution. The first sign that an attack is approaching its objective is that shots and shell take effect, amateurism vanishes, men fall, and the strain and effort mount steeply to the climax. My impression is that at present the movement for world peace is still at a considerable distance from its objective. One may doubt, indeed, whether any of these various League of Nations Unions and "No More War" societies that play about in the sun of popular approval can be regarded as even a preliminary assembly for the main attack. Great revolutions in human affairs need time to incubate, and the price of the peace of the world means an effort whose duration will have to be measured by lifetimes. I believe that such an effort will be made, but I believe it is a delusion to say that it has even begun.

*12 June, 1927.*

## XIV

### THE POSSIBILITY OF WAR BETWEEN BRITAIN AND AMERICA. SUCH A WAR IS BEING PREPARED NOW. WHAT ARE INTELLIGENT PEOPLE TO DO ABOUT IT?

LIEUT.-COMMANDER KENWORTHY is one of the most vivid and provocative members of the House of Commons. He qualifies great abilities by a certain tactlessness which has won him an unpopularity altogether beyond his merits. The other day, for example, when he was in America he confided to an interviewer, who quoted some trivial comment I had made upon the Labour Party, that I had "gone gaga." In that manner he made reverence to my seniority of twenty years. He now asks me to say something for his forthcoming book, "Will Civilization Crash?" It is, I assume, a respite from the gaga sentence; and gladly do I halt on the road to Dr. Voronoff or the crematorium to salute the still-unmellowed vigour of my friend's intelligence.

He has done a very useful, very competent, very stimulating book. I am happy to recommend it. I do not think it would be easy to better his summary of the complex of forces that make for war in the

world to-day. He has a good clear sense of fact, and of the size of a fact and the weight of a fact; and if, in his culminating chapter, "The Only Road," he does a little seem to fade, it is only where we all fade. Because, although the omens of another great war are as plain now as they were in 1907, the forces to which one can turn to stem the drift seem relatively even more confused and feeble than they were in the days when King Edward the Peacemaker flitted amiably about the Continent. David Lubin made his treaties for economic controls with every country upon earth, the League of Nations Society met thinly ever and again to hear the discreet counsels of Sir Willoughby Dickinson and Mr. Aneurin Williams, and Sir Charles Walston preached a federal constitution for Europe.

In those days one relied very much on the common sense of mankind. I will confess I was taken by surprise by the Great War. Yet I saw long ahead how it could happen, and wove fantastic stories about it, I let my imagination play about it, but at the bottom of my heart I did not feel and believe it would really be let happen. I did not suspect that Lord Grey, the German Emperor, and the rest of them were incompetent to that pitch. And when at last it did happen, and that profession of ruthless insensitive mediocrities, the military profession, was given power for four years of stupid, clumsy, and inconclusive massacre and destruction, I still clung to a delusion that at the end the common sense of mankind would

say quite definitely, "Never again," to any such experience, and would be prepared to revise its ideas of nationality, empire loyalty, race competition, and propagation, soundly and effectively as soon as it could for a moment struggle out of the mud and blood and reek in which it was entangled. Whether the phrase "the war to end war" was my contribution to the world or not, I cannot now remember. My mistake was in attributing any common sense to mankind.

To-day the huge majority of people in the world think no more about the prevention of war than a warren of rabbits thinks about the suppression of shot-guns and ferrets. They just don't want to be bothered about it. It is amazing how they accept the things that will presently slaughter them.

The other day my wife and I were sitting on the lawn of a pleasant seaside hotel. Charming young people in pretty wraps raced down to the water to bathe; others came chatting from the tennis courts. The sea front below was populous with a happy crowd; the sands gay with children. The faint sounds of a distant band on the pier were punctuated rather quaintly by practice gunfire from a distant fort. About us, in chairs of the most comfortable sort, sat the mature and prosperous, smiling pleasantly at the three military aeroplanes that manœuvred overhead. "Wonderful!" they said.

Of the hundreds of people in sight then, many scores will certainly be killed in horrible ways if war

comes in the next twenty years, they will be suffocated by lethal gases, torn to ribbons by explosives, sent limping and crying for help with frightful mortal mutilations, buried and smashed and left to die under collapsed buildings. Many more will be crippled; most perhaps impoverished. But they weren't worrying. They weren't taking life as seriously as that. Across the trim turf came a group of military officers, discussing some oafish "idea" of a landing, of "operations," and so forth, and casting no shadow at all upon the smiling people about them. Just the same fine sort of fellows they were, agreeably dull-witted, as sent hundreds of thousands of Englishmen to cruel and useless deaths in France.

They passed, and we heard a note of anxiety from an adjacent bathchair. So after all there was some one who saw it as well as ourselves! We listened, but it was only an old gentleman worried by the morning's newspaper, vexed at the last reprieve of Sacco and Vanzetti and troubled by another fall in the British birth-rate. He was expostulating about it to his stout and elderly wife, who assented as by habit and seemed chiefly preoccupied with her knitting.

He did not know what the world was coming to, he said. Lucky old boy! He never may.

I doubt if there was a human being in sight who was ever likely to read Commander Kenworthy's admirable chapter on the application of Science in Battle or his other on War in the Air, and learn the pleasures awaiting those whose share in the next

war may include a whiff of diphenyl chloroarsine. Perhaps they will know everything that is practically important about this delicious substance long before they know its name. They may even try to call it by some quite wrong name before they choke. It is very conveniently administered by air bomb in the form of an intensely irritating smoke which can penetrate most gas-masks yet devised. Says the "1926 Manual of Chemical Warfare" quoted by Commander Kenworthy:—

> "In man slight and transitory nasal irritation is appreciable after an exposure of five minutes to as little as one part of diphenyl chloroarsine in two hundred million parts of air, and as the concentration is increased the irritation shows itself sooner and in rapidly increasing severity. Marked symptoms are produced by exposure to one part of diphenyl chloroarsine in fifty million parts of air, and it may be stated in general that this concentration forms the limit of tolerance of ordinary individuals for an exposure lasting five minutes. A concentration of one part in ten million will probably incapacitate a man within a minute from the pain and distress, and nausea and vomitting accompany an exposure of from two to three minutes of this concentration. . . . These substances are generally used to cause such sensory irritation that the victim is unable to tolerate a respirator."

Then the victim tears it off, and the other gas with which the region has been soaked, the killing gas, gets him.

When the lieutenant-commander raised the question of teaching the use of gas-masks to children in the infant schools during the debate on the Air Estimates in the House of Commons in 1927, he was

greeted with laughter by the members present. Nothing could better illustrate the happy carelessness with which we move towards the next catastrophe. The air manœuvres over London this past summer have demonstrated clearly that it will be almost impossible to prevent the copious gassing of that great warren within a few hours of the opening of any new European conflict of first-class rank.

The gravest chapters in this book are not so much the recital of the novel and enhanced horror, for civilians quite as much as for soldiers, of the next war, as the excellent and disturbing study of the gathering rivalry of the United States and Britain in naval affairs, and the discussion of the possibility of a war between these two halves of the English-speaking world. The stupid professionalism of the experts is largely to blame, and the still more stupid readiness of the present governments in both Britain and America to follow the lead of these obsessed gentlemen. Whether a war between the United States and Great Britain is to be regarded as a tolerable possibility does not enter into the philosophy of the naval monomaniacs on either side of the water. Their business is to make Britain "safe" from the United States and the United States "safe" from Britain, and they are quite capable of calculating on Japan as an ally in such a war. The wholesome brotherly jealousy of our two people is to be fostered and inflamed in the cause of armament and preparedness to the fighting pitch. The rivalries of industrialists

and oil manipulators are to be dragged into the elaborating quarrel.

The reader must turn to Lieut.-Commander Kenworthy's book to realize how far this obscene foolery with human welfare has gone already and how easily it may go further. He shows how step by step the trouble may be worked up until the two great masses of English-speaking people find themselves upon different sides in the alliances of a new war that will outdo all the destructions and miseries of 1914, as that outdid the Napoleonic wars.

Very good and convincing, too, is the summary of the activities of the League of Nations, and the very complete demonstration that that ill-planned and ill-supported assembly has fallen back even from the poor courage of its earlier enterprises. As a means of settlement for minor international difficulties, which the states concerned want settled, it has a considerable usefulness, but as a guarantee against graver quarrels it is beneath contempt.

It is more than useless because it is dangerous; a great number of people in Europe and America are persuaded that it is a sort of war preventative, and that when they have paid their subscription to a local branch of the League of Nations Union and been to a lecture or a garden-party once a year under its auspices, they have done all that they can be reasonably required to do to secure world peace for ever. Upon many such excellent people the existence of the League of Nations acts as a mischievous opiate.

They would be far more actively and intelligently at work against the war-makers, if it did not exist to lull them into a false security.

But when I reach Chapter the Nineteenth, which is to tell us what is to be done, I find, as I have remarked already, a certain fading in the tones of our author's voice. He is for an alliance to suppress war; and he points out very clearly that the United States, Great Britain, Holland, and Switzerland could prohibit war to all the rest of the world to-morrow—if they chose. Between them they

> "control the finance of the whole world. No nations breaking the peace could hope for any financial help against their combined boycott. England, America, and Holland between them control the greater part of the world's supplies of petroleum, Russia being the only large-scale producer of oil in an independent position. England and Holland between them control the world's supplies of rubber. England and America between them control the greater part of the world's supplies of cotton and copper, Russia again producing comparatively small quantities of cotton and copper independently. England and France and Belgium, if she adhered, as is highly probable, control the greater part of the tropically produced edible fats. Most of the wool and jute is controlled by the British Empire.
>
> "Without money, oil, cotton, wool, rubber, copper, zinc, jute, tin, or edible fats no war on the modern scale could be waged for very long. A very large proportion of the meat and wheat of the world would also be controlled by this group of peace-keepers. Do not let us involve ourselves in complications about aggressive Powers or who is to blame in any war. To do so would simply be to cloud the issue."

Let us, in short, simply put our collective foot down and say, "Stop that war!" and it will stop.

That is an excellent passage. It should be given out as a dictation lesson in every school in the English-speaking world. We, just ourselves, can stop war almost completely.

But who are "we"?

America, Britain, Holland, Belgium, and Switzerland, with France and Germany in accord, will be the reply. But in what form are they to do it? There the lieutenant-commander boggles and remains vague. Because you see there is no way of getting these Powers together except by getting them together, and that means a federal merger of so much of their independent sovereignty as concerns their foreign relations. Before we can have peace these Powers must form a league to enforce peace. That means no tinpot debating society of every state, big or little, barbaric or civilized, strong or feeble, at Geneva, with no powers worth speaking about, but a real permanent league and alliance of these, the only really war-potent states, and *a sincere surrender of independent action* on the part of all of them for the general good. Well, not one of the communities named is even slightly prepared for such a step. It would shock them more than any declaration of war could possibly do. And until the common sense of these communities can be raised to the level of realizing this, they will continue to drift as they are drifting—to another shattering war catastrophe.

I suspect that the author of this book before me knows that as well as I do. But there is Hull to con-

sider. What would happen to the lieutenant-commander's majority if he advocated plainly and simply putting the Empire under a greater League? I quite realize he cannot afford to take so grave a risk of extinction and frustration.

A phrase, now popular in America, seized upon him in the ensuing hesitation, and was for the moment "The Only Road." Yet it is not a road out or anything like a road. It is just another piece of empty, fruitless American "idealism" utterly worthless to the world at large. War is to be "outlawed." A wonderful word! Senator Borah finds the phrase suits his voice, and I gather it has the approval of that champion international visitor and retriever of foreign orders and honorary degrees, President Nicholas Murray Butler. Between these gentlemen and Lieut.-Commander Kenworthy I note much friendliness and intimacy exists. He has been in windy, unsubstantial company, where phrases and good feeling count for more than effective action. You are to "outlaw" war. You are just to make a treaty between the Powers concerned saying as much—and there you are! You leave those Powers completely untrammelled by their declaration. Indeed, you leave everything as it was before. But you say it.

Lieut.-Commander Kenworthy gives a treaty projected by Mr. Houghton, "speaking in his private capacity as a citizen"—and only so far in earnest—which is probably the most vacuous treaty ever proposed. At present, peace, for an indefinite period,

exists legally between all these great Powers; nevertheless "a hundred years' peace agreement between the United States and Great Britain and, perhaps, other Powers" is to be signed with much fuss and ceremony—"in the most solemn manner." I can see the impressive gatherings that could be imposed upon the affair, the parties, the megaphoned and broadcast speeches, the grip of hand and hand, the noble, rich, respectable emotions. Royalty would have to be present, and Washington—it would surely be Washington—would be as full of silk hats and uniforms as a Buckingham Palace garden-party. No intimations of any method of settling all possible issues conclusively without war are made in this resonant phantom of a proposal. To do that would be to limit sovereignty.

I am sorry I cannot share Lieut.-Commander Kenworthy's faith in this magic word "Outlawry" and its stately solemnization. I accept all his premonitions of another great war; they are only too convincing; but I believe that the ending of war is a far more complex, laborious, and difficult task than such mere gesticulations as this imply. A great change is needed in the teaching of history and the training of the young citizen, a substitution of a biological for a merely economic and political conception of human life, before we can begin to hope for the secure establishment of these world controls upon which alone an enduring world peace can be sustained.

In the meantime the most effective resistance to

the approach of another great war lies in the expressed determination *now* of as many people as possible that they will have nothing to do with it, that they will not fight in it, work for it, nor pay taxes when it comes—whatever sort of war it is.

Pacificism is very ineffective, and has an unpleasant flavour if it is adopted after war has arrived; the time for active pacificism is while peace still rules. People who have made no effort to avert war cannot very well resist and grumble when through their tacit invitation war takes hold of them. The last war was a war to end war, and the politicians and statesmen have not made good. So now is the time for a great pacificist effort. Now is the time for people who want to delay and avert a catastrophe before the more deliberate organization of a world peace can be achieved, to make it clear that the war-makers will have to reckon with immense defections. That is the really practicable anti-war measure to attempt now, but it is much more likely to lead to jail than to impressive ceremonial junketings at the White House.

*2 October, 1927.*

# XV

## THE REMARKABLE VOGUE OF BROADCASTING: WILL IT CONTINUE?

When I think of the way in which mankind in general takes the gifts of science, gifts actual and gifts conditional, there comes back to my mind my own, perhaps earliest encounter with these gifts. It took the form of a box entitled, if I remember rightly, "The Young Chemist," an inexpensive box with ungrammatical and badly printed instructions for eliciting wonders of science to "the delight of all beholders" who could be induced to behold. We evoked a "lead tree," which in practice proved to be a mere seedling that damped off, and some sluggish gunpowder, and several very gratifying stinks and smells, and we wound up by mixing everything and preparing for a stupendous crash that never occurred. And another very early gift was a telephone made of two pill-boxes and a tightly stretched length of cotton between.

I still recall the sense of wonder, of passing beyond common experience during those pioneer experiments with this great modern convenience. My elder brother and I were to communicate secretly and marvellously

by this instrument. I had no doubt, and he had no doubt, that things would vibrate along that stretched cotton, altogether lovelier and livelier than the common speech and whispers of every day. He went to an upper window, from which he shouted directions to me through the vulgar air, and I stood down in the backyard. The apparatus was adjusted, and I prepared to hear such things as I had never heard before. My brother up above was seen to whisper. "Can't hear anything," I called back. "You haven't got it tight enough," said my brother, and tried again. Still no elfin voices. "Tighter!" yelled my brother with that familiar note of fraternal threatening in his voice. I made a desperate effort. And the bottom came out of the pill-box! My brother's head disappeared from the window, and I inferred he was coming downstairs.

Then, as now, I hated controversy. I was the nearer to the front door. I went off at once for a nice long solitary walk.

Since those early days science has showered its gifts upon my world and me. Science assisted by invention and stimulated by commercial enterprise. I realized that the "Young Chemist" and the pill-box telephone came only indirectly from the sublimated common sense of mankind. Science may illuminate and reveal and state and develop and suggest, but something is needed in the recipient before even a half-crown box of "chemicals" can be made to yield its best results. To the incurably puerile like Messrs.

Amery and Winston Churchill chemistry will never be more than a search for stinks of offence, and a chemical industry that can produce the loveliest colours, exquisite and subtly useful substances, and the most enriching fertilizers, will be merely a necessary source of explosives and poison gas. And to the world at large, the possibility of radiating and receiving electro-magnetic waves means almost exactly what the promise of that pill-box telephone conveyed to my childish imagination. The hope of an undefined wonder, followed by disillusionment.

It must be almost half a century since the wireless transmission of electric phases was understood to be possible, and only within the present century that wireless telegraphy has been a practical reality. The wireless telephone and all the broadcasting business is a post-war outbreak. It came, with Mlle. Suzanne Lenglen, to distract the democratic mind from the far too difficult problems of organizing a world peace. We dropped that fatiguing and contentious subject for until after the next war, and went outside to fix our aerial between the chimney and the old fir tree.

And when it was fixed we were just going to sit down and listen and listen. We should hear the best music whenever we wished. Chaliapin and Melba would sing to us; President Coolidge and Mr. Baldwin would talk to us, simply, earnestly, directly; the most august in the world would wish us good evening and pass a friendly word; should a fire or a shipwreck happen we were to get the roar of the flames and the

cries for help; Anita Loos and Charlie Chaplin (hitherto so silent) would tickle our humour, and A. A. Milne and Sir James Barrie join with us to delight the little ones when the children's hour came round. Were we earnest, Einstein would adapt himself to the available powers of transmission, or President Nicholas Murray Butler, the authentic voice of America, grand commander of all existing orders, honorary doctor of every attainable university in the world, would remind us of the broad fundamentals of wisdom and nobility. There would be debates, and in a compact ten minutes Julian Huxley, for example, and Bernard Shaw would settle about Darwinism for ever. And then finally to religion, and we should hear masses of preachers as we chose, Dean Inge in his pulpit or Palestrina given from St. Peter's itself. All the sporting results before we went to bed would be included, a weather forecast, advice about our gardens, treatment for influenza, and the exact time. One would live in a new world and ask in all the neighbours. Such was the dream of thousands of men, panting perilously on their ladders, and rather irritated and impatient to get that aerial fixed correctly.

It didn't turn out like that. Instead of first rate came tenth rate; the music was by the Little Winklebeach Pier band; mysterious unknowns, Uncle Bray and Aunt Twaddle, usurped our hour with the children, the one precious hour when parents and children came together mentally; we were told short stories

and read out scientific articles of a quality any magazine would reject; Mr. Shaw, when he tried to speak to us, was censored by the authorities, such as they were, and Professor Julian Huxley was interrupted; President Nicholas Murray Butler, it was found, could only speak in large print on superfine paper; the dog began barking untimely, and the news was drowned by the "oscillations" of an excited neighbour. Across it all dear old Mother Nature cast her net of "atmospherics" with a humour all her own. We began to ask ourselves for the first time what in particular the broadcasting was giving us that we could not get far better in some other fashion.

Music one can have at home now, very perfectly and beautifully rendered by the gramophone. Some of the newer records are marvellously true. There, indeed, one can get the very best performers and the music of one's choice. One can summon the music when one thinks fit, by day or night, repeat it, control it, finish it as one wills. Even for jazz and dance music broadcasting has but one very slight advantage—that once it is started it goes on without any change of record. But the dance music only goes on for a small part of the evening, and at any moment it may give way to Doctor Flatulent being thoughtful and kindly in a non-sectarian way.

Religious services are also more perfectly available as gramophone records. News and time signals and so forth could be sent into a house far more con-

veniently if there were a silent recording apparatus such as the ticker. Broadcasting shouts out its information once and cannot be recalled. If you miss a word, that word is missed for good; names and figures are easily missed. If you do not hear the news at the time, you do not even know that it has been given. It is absurd to suppose that science and invention could not furnish us with a silent recording set as cheap and controllable as the listening set, if this side of the wireless enterprises was turned over to ordinary ticker transmission.

The much-discussed "talks" and debates and so on are, we discover, merely spoken magazine matter; they can be far more effectively studied in the magazine itself, where diagrams and illustrations be used in conjunction with them. The number of people who have never learnt to read or who are too lazy to read and yet intellectually active enough to be interested by "serious" topics when they are vocalized, must be very small indeed. I doubt if such people really follow what they are hearing. The book is the only adequate vehicle for modern thought and discussion and for the conveyance of exact knowledge. Between its pages there is no censorship and no interrupting boy official. *Litera scripta manet.*

As a medium for advertisement again, broadcasting suffers from the disadvantage that every one turns off the noise as soon as the advertisement begins. The bawling of loud speakers, as I have heard it in

the streets of some French towns, is so obviously disconcerting to traffic that it is bound to be suppressed by legislation.

In all these matters broadcasting is an inferior substitute for better systems of transmitting news and evoking sound. Upon what is known technically as "humorous entertainment" I will be gently silent. "Radio drama" in which you cannot see the faces nor the gestures of the actors nor the scene in which they play is a new and useful art, if only because it teaches us what life must be for the blind. The listening for cuckoos which may perchance be cuckooing, or to lions who may oblige by roaring near the listening microphone, or suchlike noises of nature must be difficult to arrange and unattractive as a frequent amusement. There remain only certain possible uses of broadcasting for blind, lonely, and suffering people. To those I will return.

Most of us have been drawn sooner or later into the possession of some form of receiving apparatus, and it would be interesting to know just how many of these sets of apparatus sold are still in use. In Great Britain, where broadcasting has been centrally organized and where there is one national licensing system, it should not be difficult presently to determine the average life of the broadcast listener. I am inclined to suspect that a very large proportion of the sets sent out since the beginning must be already broken up or out of order. And that the life of the ordinary listener is so brief that there may soon be a

grave dearth of listeners. But that may be because I cannot imagine myself a patient listener even for one day, and I am still more at a loss to imagine any sort of person becoming addicted to listening-in as a frequent entertainment. Other people may be less restless. I quite understand the stage of inauguration and eagerness, the initial delight of the new toy. And afterwards there may be a kind of struggle to keep on with a thing that began with so much hope and has given so much trouble. But sooner or later boredom and disappointment with these poor torrents of insignificant sounds must ensue. Are there indeed any indefatigable listeners who have stuck to this amusement since the beginning? If so, I think they are probably very sedentary persons, living in badly lit houses or otherwise unable to read, who have never realized the possibilities of the gramophone and the pianola, and who have no capacity nor opportunity for thought or conversation.

The rest of the available population is, I should imagine, passing rapidly through the listener stage from surprise to disillusionment. When they have flowed past, then I suggest that the whole broadcasting industry will begin to dry up. The British Government has created an important salaried official body to preside over the broadcasting programmes, and it relies upon this service in times of crisis for the distribution of tendential official information. In the end that admirable committee may find itself arranging schemes of entertainment for a phantom

army of expiring licences, the last living listeners having dispersed and gone to other things. The ether will pulsate unheard with the bedtime talks of uncles who have lost their nephews and nieces, and "comics" all unaware of the emptiness of their reception, and the ultimate artfulness of official misinformation will throb in a void of inattention, as if it were the last of the dinosaurs calling for its mate.

And there will be about half-a-dozen convenient sinecures more for the Prime Minister to distribute.

The recent public discussions in the Press about broadcasting programmes are very significant symptoms. They reveal a widespread discontent among the present users of receiving sets. The disillusioned take little part in these debates. The waiters are still holding on and listening and complaining. Each one suggests a different "ideal programme." These ideal programmes recall the first bright stages of hope. There is still the fancy that busy and eminent people may be induced to spend half a day preparing and timing and saying over a measured piece—that any broadcasting official may burke if he dislikes. There is still the conception of some vast orchestra playing music to suit every mind and taste simultaneously. There is still the craving for unsectarian religiosity, for faith in things in general, combined with faith in nothing in particular. Upon one thing only do they agree. Every one wants something in vivid contrast to what is provided.

The transmitting authorities, still unwilling to face

the plain intimations of destiny, are trying all sorts of novelties, nervously and absurdly. The most delightful of all the recent attempts has been the thought-transmission experiments from the London centre. This was really radio-drama reduced to its simplest expression; even the words and sounds were omitted. It was pure blank listening. Sir Oliver Lodge cleared his throat and announced the crucial moment. Cloistered individuals sat and glared at objects and thought about them like anything. Listeners listened with straining ear-drums and painfully focussed minds. The poor ether, if it has feelings, must have felt like a cat harnessed to a cart—a most uncongenial job to put upon the theoretical vehicle of material vibrations. A hush fell upon the British Isles until Sir Oliver said "Ahem!" and permitted them to relax. Then we were to write in what we had thought or seen. The only really pleasing result of this widely diffused mind strain was that a lady in Torquay guessed object No. 5 very nearly, when object No. 3 was in the glare of the transmitting souls. The first recorded case of anticipatory wireless telepathy and clear evidence of the relativity of time. . . .

But to radio mental nothings in this way was, perhaps, too delicate a task for the broadcasting, at least as a beginning. Something a little more material might conceivably have had a better chance of getting through. Transmitters sitting before steaming plates or other appetizing objects might more easily

have conveyed impressions to fasting listeners. Perhaps this will be tried later as this restful custom of listening-in to nothing audible whatever extends.

Under the spell of the radio idea I have been doing my utmost to write impartial, impersonal, unsectarian, non-tendential, non-controversial, unprejudiced, kindly things about it, like the stuff its authorities invite us to transmit. Nevertheless, I am afraid that my own opinion peeps through, my opinion that the future of broadcasting is like the future of crossword puzzles and Oxford trousers, a very trivial future indeed. It will end as a Government job. There is a future for the wireless news ticker; that is a different proposition altogether. Yet my discouraging forecast is mingled with regret. There could be one very fine use made of broadcasting, though I cannot imagine how it could be put upon a commercially paying footing. It would give the poorest chance for any Government jobbing; there would be no scope in it for pushful young men. There are in the world a sad minority of lonely people, isolated people, endangered helpless people, sleepless people, suffering people who must lie on their backs, and who cannot handle books—and there are the blind. Convenient, portable, and not too noisy listening instruments now exist, and for this band of exceptional folk I wish there could be a transmission, day and night—and the slack hours of the night for them are often more dreadful than the day—of fine, lovely, and heartening music, beautiful chanting and the

reciting of a sort of heroic anthology. The sturdy will of the race, the courage in the world, could speak to its faltering sons and daughters. There can be a great hunger for the human voice. How good for many a tormented spirit to hear in the darkness: "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid!"

*3 April, 1927.*

# XVI

## THE SILLIEST FILM: WILL MACHINERY MAKE ROBOTS OF MEN?

I HAVE recently seen the silliest film. I do not believe it would be possible to make one sillier. And as this film sets out to display the way the world is going, I think "The Way the World Is Going" may very well concern itself with this film. It is called "Metropolis"; it comes from the great Ufa studios in Germany, and the public is given to understand that it has been produced at enormous cost. It gives in one eddying concentration almost every possible foolishness, *cliché*, platitude, and muddlement about mechanical progress and progress in general served up with a sauce of sentimentality that is all its own.

It is a German film and there have been some amazingly good German films. Before they began to cultivate bad work under cover of a protective quota. And this film has been adapted to the Anglo-Saxon taste, and quite possibly it has suffered in the process, but even when every allowance has been made for that, there remains enough to convince the intelligent observer that most of its silliness must be fundamental. Possibly I dislike this soupy whirlpool none the less because I find decaying fragments of my own

juvenile work of thirty years ago, "The Sleeper Awakes," floating about in it. Capek's Robots have been lifted without apology, and that soulless mechanical monster of Mary Shelley's, who has fathered so many German inventions, breeds once more in this confusion. Originality there is none. Independent thought, none. Where nobody has imagined for them the authors have simply fallen back on contemporary things. The aeroplanes that wander about above the great city show no advance on contemporary types, though all that stuff could have been livened up immensely with a few helicopters and vertical and unexpected movements. The motor cars are 1926 models or earlier. I do not think there is a single new idea, a single instance of artistic creation or even of intelligent anticipation, from first to last in the whole pretentious stew; I may have missed some point of novelty, but I doubt it; and this, though it must bore the intelligent man in the audience, makes the film all the more convenient as a gauge of the circle of ideas, the mentality, from which it has proceeded.

The word "Metropolis," says the advertisement in English, "is in itself symbolical of greatness"—which only shows us how wise it is to consult a dictionary before making assertions about the meaning of words. Probably it was the adapter who made that shot. The German "Neubabelsburg" was better, and could have been rendered "New Babel." It is a city, we are told, of "about one hundred years hence." It is represented as being enormously high; and all the

air and happiness are above and the workers live, as the servile toilers in the blue uniform in "The Sleeper Awakes" lived, down, down, down below.

Now far away in dear old 1897 it may have been excusable to symbolize social relations in this way, but that was thirty years ago, and a lot of thinking and some experience intervene. That vertical city of the future we know now is, to put it mildly, highly improbable. Even in New York and Chicago, where the pressure upon the central sites is exceptionally great, it is only the central office and entertainment region that soars and excavates. And the same centripetal pressure that leads to the utmost exploitation of site values at the centre leads also to the driving out of industrialism and labour from the population centre to cheaper areas, and of residential life to more open and airy surroundings. That was all discussed and written about before 1900. Somewhere about 1930 the geniuses of the Ufa studios will come up to a book of "Anticipations" which was written more than a quarter of a century ago. The British census returns of 1901 proved clearly that city populations were becoming centrifugal, and that every increase in horizontal traffic facilities produced a further distribution. This vertical social stratification is stale old stuff. So far from being "a hundred years hence," "Metropolis," in its forms and shapes, is already, as a possibility, a third of a century out of date.

But its form is the least part of its staleness. This

great city is supposed to be evoked by a single dominating personality. The English version calls him John Masterman, so that there may be no mistake about his quality. Very unwisely he has called his son Eric, instead of sticking to good hard John, and so relaxed the strain. He works with an inventor, one Rotwang, and they make machines. There are a certain number of other rich people, and the "sons of the rich" are seen disporting themselves, with underclad ladies in a sort of joy conservatory, rather like the "winter garden" of an enterprising 1890 hotel during an orgy. The rest of the population is in a state of abject slavery, working in "shifts" of ten hours in some mysteriously divided twenty-four hours, and with no money to spend or property or freedom. The machines make wealth. *How*, is not stated. We are shown rows of motor cars all exactly alike; but the workers cannot own these, and no "sons of the rich" would. Even the middle classes nowadays want a car with personality. Probably Masterman makes these cars in endless series to amuse himself.

One is asked to believe that these machines are engaged quite furiously in the mass production of nothing that is ever used, and that Masterman grows richer and richer in the process. This is the essential nonsense of it all. Unless the mass of the population has spending power there is no possibility of wealth in a mechanical civilization. A vast, penniless slave population may be necessary for wealth where there are no mass production machines, but it is prepos-

terous with mass production machines. You find such a real proletariat in China still; it existed in the great cities of the ancient world; but you do not find it in America, which has gone furthest in the direction of mechanical industry, and there is no grain of reason for supposing it will exist in the future. Masterman's watchword is "Efficiency," and you are given to understand it is a very dreadful word, and the contrivers of this idiotic spectacle are so hopelessly ignorant of all the work that has been done upon industrial efficiency that they represent him as working his machine-minders to the point of exhaustion, so that they faint and machines explode and people are scalded to death. You get machine-minders in torment turning levers in response to signals—work that could be done far more effectively by automata. Much stress is laid on the fact that the workers are spiritless, hopeless drudges, working reluctantly and mechanically. But a mechanical civilization has no use for mere drudges; the more efficient its machinery the less need there is for the quasi-mechanical minder. It is the inefficient factory that needs slaves; the ill-organized mine that kills men. The hopeless drudge stage of human labour lies behind us. With a sort of malignant stupidity this film contradicts these facts.

The current tendency of economic life is to oust the mere drudge altogether, to replace much highly skilled manual work by exquisite machinery in skilled hands, and to increase the relative proportion of

semi-skilled, moderately versatile and fairly comfortable workers. It may indeed create temporary masses of unemployed, and in "The Sleeper Awakes" there was a mass of unemployed people under hatches. That was written in 1897, when the possibility of restraining the growth of large masses of population had scarcely dawned on the world. It was reasonable then to anticipate an embarrassing underworld of under-productive people. We did not know what to do with the abyss. But there is no excuse for that to-day. And what this film anticipates is not unemployment, but drudge employment, which is precisely what is passing away. Its fabricators have not even realized that the machine ousts the drudge.

"Efficiency" means large-scale productions, machinery as fully developed as possible, and *high wages*. The British Government delegation sent to study success in America has reported unanimously to that effect. The increasingly efficient industrialism of America has so little need of drudges that it has set up the severest barriers against the flooding of the United States by drudge immigration. "Ufa" knows nothing of such facts.

A young woman appears from nowhere in particular to "help" these drudges; she impinges upon Masterman's son Eric, and they go to the "Catacombs," which, in spite of the gas mains, steam mains, cables, and drainage, have somehow contrived to get over from Rome, skeletons and all, and burrow under this city of "Metropolis." She conducts a sort

of Christian worship in these unaccountable caverns, and the drudges love and trust her. With a nice sense of fitness she lights herself about the Catacombs with a torch instead of the electric lamps that are now so common.

That reversion to torches is quite typical of the spirit of this show. Torches are Christian, we are asked to suppose; torches are human. Torches have hearts. But electric hand-lamps are wicked, mechanical, heartless things. The bad, bad inventor uses quite a big one. Mary's services are unsectarian, rather like afternoon Sunday-school, and in her special catacomb she has not so much an altar as a kind of umbrella-stand full of crosses. The leading idea of her religion seems to be a disapproval of machinery and efficiency. She enforces the great moral lesson that the bolder and stouter human effort becomes, the more spiteful Heaven grows, by reciting the story of Babel. The story of Babel, as we know, is a lesson against "Pride." It teaches the human soul to grovel. It inculcates the duty of incompetence. The Tower of Babel was built, it seems, by bald-headed men. I said there was no original touch in the film, but this last seems to be a real invention. You see the bald-headed men building Babel. Myriads of them. Why they are bald is inexplicable. It is not even meant to be funny, and it isn't funny; it is just another touch of silliness. The workers in "Metropolis" are not to rebel or do anything for themselves, she teaches, because they may rely on the vindictiveness of Heaven.

But Rotwang, the inventor, is making a Robot, apparently without any licence from Capek, the original patentee. It is to look and work like a human being, but it is to have no "soul." It is to be a substitute for drudge labour. Masterman very properly suggests that it should never have a soul, and for the life of me I cannot see why it should. The whole aim of mechanical civilization is to eliminate the drudge and the drudge soul. But this is evidently regarded as very dreadful and impressive by the producers, who are all on the side of soul and love and suchlike. I am surprised they do not pine for souls in the alarm clocks and runabouts. Masterman, still unwilling to leave bad alone, persuades Rotwang to make this Robot in the likeness of Mary, so that it may raise an insurrection among the workers to destroy the machines by which they live, and so learn that it is necessary to work. Rather intricate that, but Masterman, you understand, is a rare devil of a man. Full of pride and efficiency and modernity, and all those horrid things.

Then comes the crowning imbecility of the film, the conversion of the Robot into the likeness of Mary. Rotwang, you must understand, occupies a small old house, embedded in the modern city, richly adorned with pentagrams and other reminders of the antiquated German romances out of which its owner has been taken. A quaint smell of Mephistopheles is perceptible for a time. So even at Ufa, Germany can still be dear old magic-loving Germany. Perhaps

Germans will never get right away from the Brocken. Walpurgis Night is the name-day of the German poetic imagination, and the national fantasy capers insecurely for ever with a broomstick between its legs. By some no doubt abominable means Rotwang has squeezed a vast and well-equipped modern laboratory into this little house. It is ever so much bigger than the house, but no doubt he has fallen back on Einstein and other modern bedevilments. Mary has to be trapped, put into a machine like a translucent cocktail shaker, and undergo all sorts of pyrotechnic treatment in order that her likeness may be transferred to the Robot. The possibility of Rotwang just simply making a Robot like her, evidently never entered the gifted producer's head. The Robot is enveloped in wavering haloes, the premises seem to be struck by lightning repeatedly, the contents of a number of flasks and carboys are violently agitated, there are minor explosions and discharges. Rotwang conducts the operations with a manifest lack of assurance, and finally, to his evident relief, the likeness is taken and things calm down. The false Mary then winks darkly at the audience and sails off to raise the workers. And so forth and so on. There is some rather good swishing about in water, after the best film traditions, some violent and unconvincing machine-breaking and rioting and wreckage, and then, rather confusedly, one gathers that Masterman has learnt a lesson, and that workers and employers are now to be reconciled by "Love."

Never for a moment does one believe any of this foolish story; never for a moment is there anything amusing or convincing in its dreary series of strained events. It is immensely and strangely dull. It is not even to be laughed at. There is not one good-looking nor sympathetic nor funny personality in the cast; there is, indeed, no scope at all for looking well or acting like a rational creature amid these mindless, imitative absurdities. The film's air of having something grave and wonderful to say is transparent pretence. It has nothing to do with any social or moral issue before the world or with any that can ever conceivably arise. It is bunkum and poor and thin even as bunkum. I am astonished at the toleration shown it by quite a number of film critics on both sides of the Atlantic. And it cost, says the London "Times," six million marks! How they spent all that upon it I cannot imagine. Most of the effects could have been got with models at no great expense.

The pity of it is that this unimaginative, incoherent, sentimentalizing, and make-believe film, wastes some very fine possibilities. My belief in German enterprise has had a shock. I am dismayed by the intellectual laziness it betrays. I thought Germans even at the worst could toil. I thought they had resolved to be industriously modern. It is profoundly interesting to speculate upon the present trend of mechanical invention and of the real reactions of invention upon labour conditions. Instead of plagiarizing from a book thirty years old and resuscitat-

ing the banal moralizing of the early Victorian period, it would have been almost as easy, no more costly, and far more interesting to have taken some pains to gather the opinions of a few bright young research students and ambitious, modernizing architects and engineers about the trend of modern invention, and develop these artistically. Any technical school would have been delighted to supply sketches and suggestions for the aviation and transport of A.D. 2027. There are now masses of literature upon the organization of labour for efficiency that could have been boiled down at a very small cost. The question of the development of industrial control, the relation of industrial to political direction, the way all that is going, is of the liveliest current interest. Apparently the Ufa people did not know of these things and did not want to know about them. They were too dense to see how these things could be brought into touch with the life of to-day and made interesting to the man in the street. After the worst traditions of the cinema world, monstrously self-satisfied and self-sufficient, convinced of the power of loud advertisement to put things over with the public, and with no fear of searching criticism in their minds, no consciousness of thought and knowledge beyond their ken, they set to work in their huge studio to produce furlong after furlong of this ignorant, old-fashioned balderdash, and ruin the market for any better film along these lines.

Six million marks! The waste of it!

The theatre when I visited it was crowded. All but the highest-priced seats were full, and the gaps in these filled up reluctantly but completely before the great film began. I suppose every one had come to see what the city of a hundred years hence would be like. I suppose there are multitudes of people to be "drawn" by promising to show them what the city of a hundred years hence will be like. It was, I thought, an unresponsive audience, and I heard no comments. I could not tell from their bearing whether they believed that "Metropolis" was really a possible forecast or no. I do not know whether they thought that the film was hopelessly silly or the future of mankind hopelessly silly. But it must have been one thing or the other.

*17 April, 1927.*

# XVII

## IS LIFE BECOMING HAPPIER?

Criticism of this series of articles is not always praise. Critics, and even friendly critics, complain that I run things down. I imagined that my real failing was an impatience to push things up. It has been complained and repeated, even by Sir Alan Cobham, who ought to know better, that I take a gloomy view of aviation, whereas I take so bright a view of its possibilities that I am driven to exasperation by the financial incompetence and narrow patriotism that restrict its practical development. And I am reported to be "pessimistic" about broadcasting, though the truth is that I have anticipated its complete disappearance—confident that the unfortunate people, who must now subdue themselves to "listening-in" will soon find a better pastime for their leisure.

But these comments and certain observations arising out of that film "Metropolis," a stray article by Mr. Mencken, and a week-end conversation, have turned my attention to the astonishing prevalence of a disposition to disregard and deny, firstly that life in general is happier than it ever was before, and secondly, that it needs but a little vigour and clear-

headedness to make it much happier than it is now or ever has been.

It was pretended in that film "Metropolis," for example, that the development of a great mechanical civilization must reduce a large part of the population from some imaginary old-world happiness, sweet, golden, tender, and true, to machine-minding drudgery. That is a quite common assertion made without a shadow of justification in fact. And we are constantly being told that the human animal is "degenerating," body and mind, through the malign influence of big towns; that a miasma of "vulgarity" and monotony is spreading over a once refined and rich and beautifully varied world, that something exquisite called the human "soul," which was formerly quite all right, is now in a very bad way, and that plainly before us, unless we mend our ways and return to mediæval dirt and haphazard, the open road, the wind upon the heath brother, simple piety, an unrestricted birth-rate, spade husbandry, handmade furniture, honest, homely surgery without anæsthetics, long skirts and hair for women, a ten-hour day for workmen, and more slapping and snubbing for the young, there is nothing before us but nervous wreckage and spiritual darkness. This sort of stuff is exuded in enormous volume, and it offers an immense resistance to systematic progress. It is sustained by multitudes of people who are in a position to be better informed. The Gummidge chorus is never silent; the thoughtful headshaker moping for

a return to mediævalism casts his daily shadow on every patch of sunshine, on each new social enterprise and hopeful effort. Everything we have is cheapened by comparison with an entirely legendary past and with an entirely imaginary state of "natural" health and joyfulness.

Let us admit that life still displays much unhappiness and that it is overhung by the frightful dangers of modern war. Let us concede the black possibilities latent in nationalism, flag worship, educational slackening, and the class jealousy and class malignancy of the prosperous. Even so, there are the soundest reasons for maintaining that never, since life first appeared upon this planet, has there been so great a proportion of joy, happiness, and contentment as there is about us now, nor so bright an outlook.

But before we can see this issue plainly, we have to clear our minds of certain popular errors based mainly on a misconceived theology. Many people believe it is their duty to assume the perfection of nature, and with them there is no arguing. They will hold the hyena lovely and the fever germ a perfect device. If, however, we dismiss such preconceptions and ask ourselves plainly what happiness there is now in the wild life of the jungle or desert or deep sea, we shall come upon a different answer. Nature is clumsy and heedlessly cruel. Life apart from man is not a happy spectacle. It is a flight and a chase, a craving, famished business, a round of assassinations. The jungle

is no merry meeting place; it is a rustling ambush in which things lurk and creep. They become noisy only under the spur of an extravagant sexual desire. How cruel and tormented seems the sexual life of almost every living creature except our modern, sophisticated selves! Even over the herd browsing in the midst of plenty hangs a constant, vague apprehension. A cracking twig will start a panic. The first motives in animal life are hunger and fear. Apart from the brief capering spring-time of young creatures —and how brief it is!—there is no intimation of any happiness whatever except the fierce, bolted gratification of an intense appetite or the monstrous triumph of a "kill." The most fortunate thing in the life of an animal is the shortness of its memory and its want of foresight. Throughout the whole realm of nature it is only among birds and mammals that we detect any indication whatever of a real delight in life. Birds sing in spring and the young of birds and mammals play through a brief phase of parental protection; mere gleams of sunshine these on the universal hard drive for bare existence.

Thoughtless people talk of "nature's remedies" and imagine that every wild animal with that instinctive pharmacopœia must be in the pink of condition. But variations are far too infrequent and natural selection far too loose a guide to keep pace with the secular change of conditions and equip animals with an inherent cure for every ailment and an automatic counter-stroke to every danger. There is no such self-

righting arrangement in the natural world. Most of nature's handwork is loose-jointed and casual. The sick and weak and maimed are sooner destroyed and less in evidence, that is all. Wild species are just as subject to epidemics and hideous parasitism as man. Few creatures seem to have found their "perfect" food, or, having found it, are able to keep to it. Indigestion and malnutrition are as rife in the forest as the slum. Elephant-hunters say they can tell the proximity of a herd by the borborygmic noises the poor brutes emit, and Glasfurd describes a tiger's life as an alternation of uncomfortable hunger and uncomfortable repletion. There is no reason to suppose that early man was any better off than an animal or any happier. Like the animals he was a fear-driven, hunger-driven, lust-driven creature, feeding perforce on what he could find. Some of the earliest known human bones are diseased bones.

The story of the common man since the beginning of social life has been anything but a record of innocent festivals and homely happiness. With the development of agriculture he began to escape from the hunger and fear, the tramp's life in the wilderness, of the wandering savage, but only by accepting an increasing burthen of regular toil. History and archæology preserve only the records of the successful few; we must guess how many myriads of drudges worked the mines, pulled the galleys, and hoed the fields for the greatness of the Pyramids or the pretty palaces of Cnossus. And pestilence and famine returned in

every lifetime. Pestilence and famine have disappeared from the general routine of life in the last hundred years or less, and that only in the Atlantic civilizations. The social history of the Old Testament goes to the accompaniment of a prolonged groan from the common people. The Roman Empire was an administrative pyramid based on slaves, serfs, and distressed taxpayers. Its distinctive instrument of social discipline was the cross. There is no period in the past upon which a well-informed man can put his finger and say, "At this time common men had more joyful lives than they have to-day."

There is only a very scanty account of the life of the common man through most of the historical period. It was not worth writing about. As M. Abel Chevalley points out in his admirable study of that father of the English novel, Thomas Deloney, it is suddenly in the Elizabethan period that literature stoops so low as to tell of tradespeople and their servants. Peasant life still remained in darkness. Even now we get only half-lit pictures of that earthly underworld. Mr. Liam O Flaherty's glimpses of the Irish cultivator and Mr. Caradoc Evans's sketches of the primitive folk in Wales are more convincing than pleasant. Deloney shows us a squabbling, insecure, undignified life, much pervaded by envy and malice, ill-housed, ill-clothed, and irregularly fed, without medical attention, amusement, reading, change of scene. It is much the same squalor that we find as the background of the adventures in the Roman world of

Petronius. And still it was a marked advance, as Chevalley notes, on mediæval life.

That squalid life remained the common life until the third or fourth decade of the nineteenth century. There seemed little hope of any improvement. There were great social changes, an increase of productivity and population in the eighteenth century, but they brought no perceptible amelioration of the common lot. The common man remained dirty and ignorant, needy, or incessantly laborious. The first clumsy machines brought trouble rather than relief; they threw multitudes out of employment; they needed drudges to prepare the way for them; they needed drudges to supplement their mechanical imperfections.

It was only after the middle of the nineteenth century that the real significance of mechanical invention and the practical applications of scientific knowledge and method became apparent. Then it began to dawn upon mankind that the age of the mere drudge was at an end. The outbreak of universal education in Western Europe was the practical recognition of this. Meanly and grudgingly planned, against the resistance of many privileged people, and much disturbed by their intense jealousy of their "social inferiors," the establishment of compulsory elementary education marks, nevertheless, a new phase in the history of our species. It is the beginning of at least a chance for everybody. Close upon it came a fall in the birth-rate, and an even greater fall in the infantile death-rate—clear intimations that

the common people no longer consented to leave their increase to the unchecked urgency of bestial instincts nor the health of their offspring to chance. Concurrently, too, there began such a shortening of the hours of work as to extend leisure, which had once been the privilege of a minority, to nearly the whole population.

The present phase of these changes shows us the old once necessary drudge population becoming in part an unemployable and unwanted abyss of people who are either natural inferiors or exceptionally unlucky individuals, and in part a much larger and increasing new mass of comparatively versatile semi-skilled workers, whose efficiency and standards of life are rising, whose security, leisure, and opportunity increase. These latter are the new common people that the extension of knowledge and machine production has given the world, and their development will be the measure of civilization in the future. Even at its present level it is an unprecedented mass of happy and hopeful life in comparison with any common life that has ever existed before, and there are many reasons for hoping—if great wars can be avoided and if it does not swamp itself by unrestrained proliferation—that it will go on to much higher levels still.

This expanding mass of new common people bulks largest in the United States of America, but it is as highly developed in the more complex British system even though proportionally it is not so great, and it

exists with qualifications and differences in all industrialized Europe. It needs only a decade or so of peace and security to appear in China, and as the economic reconstruction of Russia brings that country into line and co-operation again with other European developments, we shall probably find that there also the conditions of machine production have evoked a new town population and a new agricultural worker, able to read, write, discuss, and think, with much the same amount of leisure and freedom as his Western comrade. The dictatorship of the proletariat may dictate what it likes, but the machine will insist, there as everywhere, that the people who will work it and for whom it will work must have minds quickened by education and refreshed by leisure, must be reasonably versatile, and must not be overworked or embittered.

Let me note one or two other points making for happiness in our days. For the first time in history over large parts of the earth the beating of inferiors has disappeared. For the first time in history the common worker has leisure assigned to him as his right. Never have common people been so well clad or so well housed. Never have they had so much freedom of movement. There is a horror of cruelty to men and animals more widely diffused than it has ever been before. There has been an extraordinary increase in social gentleness. There has never been so small a proportion of sickness and death in the community. All these things mean happiness—more universal than it has ever been.

But this general march towards happiness is not fated and assured. There is no guarantee in progress. This much of release for the common man from disease, privation, and drudgery has come about very rapidly as a consequence of inventions and discoveries that were not made to that end, and the development of the new common people into a world of civilization of free and happy individuals is manifestly challenged by enormous antagonistic forces. It may be impeded, delayed, or defeated. Flags and the loyalties and passions of insensate nationalism are flatly opposed to the attainment of a general human welfare. Every man in military uniform is a threat of violence; every gun and military implement is a man-trap in the path to a universal order. The false legend of the glorious past of our race is in a perpetual struggle against the hope of its future. Obscurantism and fear lie in wait for every courageous innovation in social and economic life. Indolence is their ally and false thinking their friend. Continual progress can only be assured by an incessant acutely critical vigilance. None the less, the common man to-day is happier than he has ever been, and with a clearer hope of continuing betterment. The common man in quite a little space of years may be better off than are even the fortunate few to-day.

And now call me a pessimist if you can!

*1 May, 1927.*

# XVIII

## EXPERIMENTING WITH MARRIAGE. LEGAL RECOGNITION OF CURRENT REALITIES

For some time sounds of confused disputation have been coming out of Denver and gathering the attention of the world. The story is complex in its telling but simple in its essentials. Judge Lindsey, of the well-known Juvenile Court in that city, is being subjected to processes of ousting that need not hold our attention too closely. Mighty forces have worked for his overthrow. The Ku Klux Klansmen have gathered in "Klavern" against the Judge. The Grand Dragon of the Ku Klux Klan, a Baptist minister in his less fiery moments, seems to be in unwonted alliance with eminent Roman Catholic leaders against him. He is violently assailed and violently supported. In detail the conflict becomes squabble, but the matter upon which issue is raised is one of quite fundamental significance to any one concerned with the present drift of things. The fight rages about the institution of marriage. Judge Lindsey has been offering to improve it.

That Juvenile Court in Denver is known throughout the civilized world. It has attracted many Euro-

pean students and inquirers. It is as old as the century. It owes its constitution and methods very largely to Lindsey's indefatigable zeal. Its primary function was the separation of delinquent children and juvenile first offenders from the hard atmosphere of the common police court. They were to be dealt with upon special lines, saved from the stigma of conviction, and if possible turned back from becoming members of the criminal class. This task the court has performed admirably. Its functions developed into very valuable preventive work. It became a place of reconciliation between parents and erring and recalcitrant sons and daughters, it shepherded home a multitude of runaways, and it saved great numbers of misguided and luckless girls from shame and degradation. Naturally it antagonized the saloon and the white-slave trader. For twenty years it worked with the blessing of the Roman Catholic community. Father McMenamin, one of the leading clergy in Denver, described it as "a constructive force in our community, and a godsend to many a boy and girl."

The Klansmen, however, were early hostile, and their first hostility was based on the good relations between the Juvenile Court and the Catholics. They denounced Judge Lindsey for sending girls, girls of Catholic antecedents, to the Catholic House of the Good Shepherd, to work for nothing, as they alleged, in the laundry and be debauched. That was their agreeable version of the methods of a well-managed

Catholic Home of spotless repute. It is interesting to consider the proposals that could bring Klansmen and Catholic, in spite of this, into alliance against the Judge.

Nothing could better illuminate the struggle between innovation and conservative reaction in matrimonial relations that goes on to-day all over the civilized world. It is not a struggle between good men and bad men; it is a struggle between novel and established ideas, between projected and time-honoured social usages. Father McMenamin and Judge Lindsey are well-known men in Denver; their characters have been gauged by years of public service, and there can be no question that each is a conspicuously honest, trustworthy, disinterested leader. The Klansmen lie a little under the shadow of "Elmer Gantry," that deadly book; there is much rant, froth, and violence upon their Denver record, and their testimonial remains in suspense, but for our present purposes we can very well restrict the issue to the two unquestionably straightforward protagonists, Judge Lindsey and Father McMenamin.

Now this is what has blown up Judge Lindsey and his Juvenile Court in Denver. After years of experience of adolescent misbehaviour he has come to the conclusion that in our modern community marriage is delayed too late, and that a long and lengthening gap has been opened between the days when school and college are left behind and the days when it seems safe and reasonable to settle down and found

a family. There is a growing proportion of fretting and impatient young people in the community, and out of their undisciplined eagerness springs a tangle of furtive promiscuity, prostitution, disease, crime, and general unhappiness. Young men cannot apply themselves to sound work because of nature's strong preoccupation, and the life of possibly even a majority of young women is a life of tormented uncertainty. Judge Lindsey, with the weight of a new immense experience upon him, and with the assertions of the advocates of birth control before him, has suggested a more orderly accommodation of social life to the new conditions.

He has proposed a type of preliminary marriage which he calls Companionate Marriage. This is to be a marriage undertaken by two people for "mutual comfort," as the Prayer-book has it, with a full knowledge of birth control, and with the deliberate intention of not having children. So long as there are no children and with due deliberation, this companionate marriage may be dissolved by mutual consent. On the other hand, at any time the couple may turn their marriage into the permanent "family marriage" form. That is his proposal, and the State of Colorado has full power to make the experiment of such an institution. He wants such laws to be made. He believes that in most cases such marriages would develop naturally into permanent unions and that their establishment would clear the social atmosphere of a vast distressful system of illicit relationships, irrevo-

cable blunders, abortions, desertions, crimes, furtive experimenting and all those dangers to honour, health, and happiness that go with furtiveness in these matters. He believes it would mean a great simplification and purification of social life and the release of much vexed and miserable energy.

Now before we consider the opposition of Father McMenamin to this project it may be well to note the fact that there is a considerable conflict of authority about this birth control. It is certainly not a sure and complete avoidance of offspring in all cases, though with due observances and with most people it works as Judge Lindsey counts upon its working. But a certain small percentage of his companionate marriages will unintentionally convert themselves into normal family marriages. Birth control does not certainly remove, it does but diminish, the probability of consequences, and it affords no such opening of "flood gates" to "unbridled licence," and so forth, as its antagonists assume. Furtive and illicit indulgence are not relieved of anxiety by current birth-control knowledge. That is one point in this question not generally made clear.

Another criticism of wilfully restrained fecundity seems to be of far less value. People of medical and quasi-scientific standing who dislike birth control talk of its disastrous effects upon the nerves and general health. They babble of "nervous wrecks." They produce no evidence of these effects, they assert that they exist and talk copiously of their own remarkable

opportunities for observation. But equally authoritative witnesses of an opposite school of thought, with equally remarkable opportunities for observation, will talk of the disastrous consequences of chastity and suppression. It is a field in which most people seem to think with individual bias and a violent disregard of fact. The truth seems to be that the human constitution is remarkably adaptable in these matters, a normal individual can establish habits of self-indulgence or habits of restraint, can pass from phases of great liveliness to phases of apathy and remain a happy and healthy organism. We can build up systems of habit either way. There is no standard sexual life.

Quite apart from the varieties of temperamental type, each type is capable of living in a variety of ways and there is practically nothing in any of these vehement asseverations for or against this or that liberty or this or that restriction. Many abstinent people and many declared birth-controllers are obviously healthy and vigorous people; the way of living of one sort is just as healthy as the way of living of the other sort; there are sturdy old rakes, equally sturdy priests and other celibates, hale grandmothers of a multitude, and brisk and happy old maids. One has but to look around one at the people one meets to make all this alarmist propaganda dissolve away.

Speaking very loosely and generally I would give it as my own matured impression that amidst the strains, provocations, challenges, incessant sugges-

tions and reminders of modern life, it conduces to calm of mind and personal pride, it is the least troublesome and easiest way of living for most people, to lead a life of normal sexual reactions reasonably safeguarded against overwhelming offspring, and that all the specific demands of nature upon the nerves and health of even the most feminine of women are to be met by bringing one or two children into the world. Nature is much more accommodating than moral and social theories. The question of physical health has indeed very little to do with these discussions. It is a pity that each side will drag it in.

But after dismissing that much of the argument there still remains a complex tangle of perplexities about marriage. It is a tangle that it may be perhaps impossible to resolve altogether. Many modern people discuss it as though it was a simple problem for the comfortable satisfaction of physical desire. But in the human being there is no such thing as unmixed physical desire; there is always in matters sexual a stir of the imagination. Thereby even the grossest sexual indulgence is lifted to a plane above gourmandize or gluttony. And also, long before one begins to think about the way in which children affect the problem, there is a vast system of reactions between men and women over and above sexuality. There is a general magic, there are elements of admiration, vague pleasure, fear and friendship long before the development of those crowding preferences that be-

come love. Further beyond the passion of love, resting upon that as a basis, resting upon the intimacy and association it establishes, is married love, which is the deepest and tenderest relationship on earth. It is in its fullness a slow growth; perhaps it needs youth and a struggle in common for its perfect establishment, perhaps like some sorts of fruit it needs cold and storm as well as sunshine for its ripening.

In the atmosphere created by this sure, deep-rooted married love alone can one find the happy assurance, the perfect security of help and loyal sympathy in which children will grow easily and insensibly to the loyalties, the habitual serviceableness, the necessary generosities, of modern citizenship.

I believe at the bottom of the mind of such a good man as Father McMenamin in his antagonism to Judge Lindsey is an intense conviction that for most people married love is the highest good, and certainly that is the persuasion of all his more reputable allies. They think it is not only the highest personal good but the highest social good. And because they know it is a thing of slow growth, they want to protect people against hasty and fitful breaches, to tie them irrevocably, to bind their habits and interests into one indissoluble bundle, so that they may grow together in spite of themselves. They hate any thought of divorce. They distrust birth control because it seems to them to minimize fidelity. They will not trust people to find out for themselves in time how good and precious this thorough, permanent, insepa-

rable union can be. They are afraid that Judge Lindsey's companionate marriages will be too readily voided and that a shallow, promiscuous habit of mind will be established in young poeple. Judge Lindsey argues, on the contrary, that his project enables them to begin a lifelong association at the very outset of their emotional lives and that the greater danger of promiscuity and the trivialization of the sexual life lies in a delayed marriage. He thinks that the rigidities of the established system defeat its own ends. The real issue lies there.

This is not fundamentally a religious question. People are too inclined to think that the Roman Catholic Church is opposed to any dissolution of marriage or the family, as a part of its faith, but this is a complete mistake. The Roman Catholic Church, it is true, sets its face against divorce, but on the other hand it will annul a marriage with great facility and so reduce children who have imagined themselves to be legitimate to the status of bastards, a thing no sort of civil divorce has ever done. If such annulments are infrequent in the Roman Catholic community, that is not because of any doctrinal bar to them, but because the habits and organization and common sense of that community are against a ready resort to such releases. It is as unfair to accuse Roman Catholicism of distinctive rigidity here as it is to charge liberal thinkers with immoral motives. Religious prejudice is as much out of place in this discussion as medical prejudice. The real issue is one of

social psychology; whether one universal binding, invariable, intolerant marriage contract does or does not conduce to the establishment in the larger number of cases of this deep, fine, full, rich, socially beneficial, child-protecting relationship of married love or whether that is a harmful delusion. Those who are with Father McMenamin are of the former opinion; those who are with Judge Lindsey, of the latter.

For my own part I must confess myself not so much on the side of Judge Lindsey as further away from Father McMenamin on the other side out beyond Judge Lindsey. I want people to have all the knowledge and freedom I can in these things as in all things. I think that compulsion defeats its own ends and that animals and human beings have an instinctive disposition to resist being forced along paths that, left to themselves, they would quite naturally follow. A vast amount of sexual misbehaviour is *provoked* by prohibitions and proscriptions. It does not follow that because a thing is very, very good it ought to be forced upon everybody. There are great varieties of character in the world and for many of them married love is impossible. There are many who miss a full natural development of married love and yet have a reasonable claim for respect and consideration in less complete or less enduring relationships.

People are needlessly afraid of a variety of reputable contracts and of freedom in the unions of men and women because they do not realize how natural

and necessary is the habitual association of one man with one woman in the workaday world. It is a thing you can safely leave most people to discover and realize for themselves. If people were completely free to do anything they pleased in sexual matters, they would do, only more easily and happily, much the same things that we take great pains to insist they shall do and compel them to do now. As many would pair as pair now and perhaps more, and the unfortunate and the unpairable would not be made to suffer for bad luck or singularity of temperament. People would not be constrained; there would be less shame and less persecution through it all. There would be easier readjustment after mistakes, earlier mating in most cases, and a great diminution of prostitution and the quasi-criminal sexual underworld.

On the whole, I think that popular thought and will are moving steadily in the direction of rationalism, candour, and charity in sexual things and away from emotionalism, concealment, compulsion, and repression. This dispute at Denver is certainly only one of the opening incidents in a very wide and far-reaching movement for the courageous revision and modernization of marriage.

*26 June, 1927.*

# XIX

## NEW LIGHT ON MENTAL LIFE: MR. J. W. DUNNE'S EXPERIMENTS WITH DREAMING

An old friend, Mr. J. W. Dunne, has recently sent me a new book he has written, "An Experiment with Time." I find it a fantastically interesting book. It has stirred my imagination vividly and I think most imaginative people will be stirred by the queer things he has advanced in it. I do not think it has yet been given nearly enough attention.

Years ago, in the last century, Mr. Dunne came to see me for the first time. He was then a young captain in the army, and he had to go out to the South African war. He wanted to tell me something, an idea, that he didn't want to have lost if, too abruptly for explanations, some Boer marksman chanced to wipe him out of existence. It was the idea of an aeroplane with V-shaped wings based on a number of experiments he had made with paper models—a perfectly sound idea, which has since been realized in a very stable but not very swift or agile machine. If Dunne had had money and opportunity for experiment, I am sure that about A.D. 1902–3 he would have constructed a practicable heavier-than-air machine, but he had to go off to his blockhouse work in the

Orange River Colony, and he never got a free hand to build until other investigators had passed him by.

In those days it was extraordinarily hard to get people to show a practical interest in the air. He came to me because I had written what was considered very wild stuff about flight. I had said that we should fly before 1950! Not a dazzling hit, but better than the mighty majority opinion that we should never fly at all. This magnificent encouragement won Dunne's gratitude and confidence; he put all he had done so far in my hands and I was to lock it up and keep it secret for him until he was either killed or could go on with his experiments again. He had to come to me, a perfect stranger, before he could find any one who would take him seriously enough to harbour what he had to deposit.

I still remember very cheerfully a funny afternoon we spent in my garden at Sandgate, while Dunne rushed about, climbing up walls and jumping on garden seats, to release little fluttering paper models which illustrated this or that aspect of his idea.

He struck me then as having one of the most patient and persistent minds I had ever encountered. None of the magnesium flare about his mind, the sort of thing that goes fizz and lights up everything —as much as it is ever going to light up everything —but wary, observing, and, when at last it gets on a trail, indefatigable. He worried on with aviation for a long time, bad health and the Great War used him up and partly veiled him from me, and it is only

now that I learn of another scent that he has been following to the most remarkable conclusions.

What set him going was a very common experience, the fact that dreams in an odd, erratic way seem to foreshadow events. Many of us have had the experience of an anticipatory dream, and usually we have been so vague about it that the story was hardly worth the telling. Mr. Townley Searle, the London bookseller, told the other day of an unusually lucid one. He dreamt he was among the stalls in the Caledonian Market, and found and bought a first edition of Thomas Hardy's "Desperate Remedies," which is worth £100 nowadays. So vivid was the impression that he got up the next morning and went straight to the market, bought an umbrella for sixpence because it was coming on to rain, and then, recognizing the stall of his dream, went straight to it and got the three volumes for a shilling, a clear profit of £99, 18*s*. 6*d*.

That was a rarely simple case. The ordinary dream with foreshadowing elements is more mixed than that. One of my own has stuck in my mind for years and is much more typical. In my dream I was riding a bicycle on the Neva, which was frozen over; the bicycle skidded on the ice, went faster and faster, and got more and more out of control; ahead of me appeared a great sledge with a gaunt horse driven by a woman in white furs; I swept towards it helplessly and collided with the horse, clung to its head, and pulled it down as I awoke. The moment of cling-

ing to the head of the horse was prolonged, and it haunted me. I had a vivid sense of the feel of the animal's ears and long cheek. I was then actually learning to ride the bicycle and, a day or so after, I came round a corner on a little chariot-like milk-cart on the wrong side of the road. I lacked the skill to avoid this and found myself clinging to the head of the pony, which came down in exactly the mood of suspense, and with exactly the same feel as the sledge horse did in my dream. But as I am not of Dunne's curious and persistent quality I never followed up that very striking experience. I had not told it to any one before the accident and I accepted very uncritically the current explanation of these apparently foreshadowing dreams.

Probably the reader knows that "explanation." It is that there is lack of simultaneousness in the action of the two hemispheres of the brain so that one lags a little behind the other; there is a double impression and the second one has the effect of being a memory of some previous event. The theory is that there was no real dream at all, but only the delusion of a memory of a dream produced by the flagging impression. That accounts for the resemblances of the event to the pseudo-dream but manifestly it does not account for the differences; the lady in white furs and the Neva for example have still to be accounted for. If I never really had that dream, as a dream how did they get into my memory? Why wasn't the dream exactly like the event?

Dunne seems to have had more than one such experience. He dreamt, for example, of the great volcanic outbreak in Martinique while he was soldiering in the Orange Free State. He saw it just about to happen, fissures opening in the ground and steam jetting out. What he saw was quite unlike what probably did happen. In his dream he made violent attempts to warn the inhabitants; he was very clear about the number. He woke up shouting, "Four thousand people will be killed." Days later came a newspaper. Headlines proclaimed the disaster and the probable loss of forty thousand, not four thousand, lives. The reading of these headlines was the event foreshadowed by the dream. He read them hastily, misread the figures as four thousand, and the paper passed out of his reach. Long afterwards he found that these figures, both four thousand and forty thousand, were quite erroneous. His dream, it is plain, was not of the actual event, but merely an anticipation of his mental impression when he looked at the paper.

Several occurrences of this sort put Dunne on the alert. He decided to write down all his dreams so soon as he was awake. He kept a bedside notebook. He trained himself to watch for his dreams at the moment of awakening and acquired considerable skill at recovering his dreams as they slipped away into nothingness. He made a parallel daylight diary of his more vivid waking impressions. And he induced several other people to take up this business of dream

watching. He has accumulated records. All this he tells very interestingly in this book of his. And the striking conclusion that emerges from these observations is this, that the share of future mental impressions is almost as important or quite as important in the making of dreams as mental impressions in the past. To-morrow's happenings are just as likely to appear, clipped and disturbed, in the dream flow as yesterday's.

We most of us have some idea of the making of dreams. Some sound, some internal or external disturbance lifts the mental existence out of the unconscious towards waking. The mind ceases to forget, memory and attention dawn, and the drifting mental content groups itself with an assumption of reasonable connectedness about the disturbing sensation. Then we either wake and remember, or the whole stir subsides back into forgetfulness and unconsciousness. Most of us realize how the impressions of yesterday in particular, and of remote yesterdays less patently, supply forms and colour to the stir, and how desires we have thwarted and temptations we have resisted escape into this dream of life and play havoc with our suppressions. What most of us do not realize, says Dunne, is the share which little scraps of to-morrow's impressions also contribute. That is the essence of his discovery. It is difficult at the time to sift the foreshadowings from the recollections and the distorted, escaped suppressions, so unimportant and elusive they seem to be. It is only when the premoni-

tions are exceptionally striking that they are remembered and recognized when they turn up in actual fact, and so detected. They have to be very vivid or very peculiar. But the more closely and skilfully you watch, he insists, the more of the futurist element is evident in the dream.

Moreover, he had added to the observation of what I may call natural dreaming the observation of states of mind when the attention is deliberately relaxed so as to leave the mental existence at a level hardly above the level of recording consciousness. He turns his back, as it were, on the mental existence, and then suddenly snatches what is there before it sails out of reach, and in these phases of mind also he finds the images of future and past impressions mingling together.

Now I think it may be possible to put these facts into a comprehensible relationship to quite a number of other facts which do not enter into Dunne's speculation. I won't exactly follow him in this statement that follows, which is necessarily in the space at my disposal a very sketchy statement. Partly it derives from him and partly I am adding something of my own. The point of interest is that our mind can be considered as existing in the past and in the future, as extending, so to speak, both ways beyond what we consider to be the actual moment. I hope that does not strike the reader as too crazy a proposition. Most of us have given very little thought to what we mean by the actual moment. What do we mean by

"now"? How much time is it? Behind "now" stretches the past, ahead is the future, but is it itself an infinitesimal instant? Do we merely exist as a flash, as a series of flashes, so to speak, of no duration at all, between a past gone by and a future still to come, or does "now" bulge into both past and future? This will be a novel and amusing question to most people and a profoundly irritating one to certain types. They will be so accustomed to speak of past and future as though they were in actual contact at the present, that the assertion will be astonishing and difficult, and yet as they think it over it will acquire an insinuating and troublesome plausibility, that "now" is perhaps always a measurable, and may under certain circumstances be a quite considerable, piece of time. It sounds paradoxical to say that portions of the past and future both enter into "now," but actual experience gives a feeling in favour of that illogical view. To be illogical is not necessarily to be in error. Mankind may have been thinking about past and future in the wrong way.

Next I would suggest that as we become attentive to anything and excited by actual fact, "now" gathers itself together, and the more excited and attentive we are, the more "now" gathers itself together towards its central point. As we become increasingly active and "on the spot," the acuter and the narrower does the "now" under attention become. In our crises we live, as we say, only for the moment. As we relapse towards inattention, reverie, dreaminess,

"now" becomes obtuse and broader and broader. In the hypnotic condition, in dreaming, and still more so in dreamless sleep, "now" may broaden down towards and below the limit of consciousness, until it spreads, it may be, to large parts, and even to all of our mental life from beginning to end. In the sleeping mind or in the dead mind nothing is past or future. As we rouse ourselves, as we become alert, as we wake up and pay attention to things, that vague "now" is drawn together towards the moment of action. But as the attention leaps to action, it trails with it faint and rapidly fading impressions of the more diffused state of mind from which it has arisen.

This queer idea that the "now" of the dreaming and inattentive mind may extend to an undefined amount into both past and future is compatible with all Dunne's dreaming and quasi-dreaming phenomena. On any other supposition they are inexplicable. And it is consistent with the remarkable story of Mr. Townley Searle, and many other like tales of premonition. Moreover, Professor Gilbert Murray recently published some disconcerting facts, disconcerting, that is, for the sceptic, with regard to what he considered to be telepathy. One would as soon doubt his word as one would doubt that of Aristides. He is above suspicion even of careless testimony. I have not the report of his experiments by me, but they were very puzzling and perplexing indeed. They went something in this way: he would, with various friends, read or be told or agree upon some strange scene and

event, and his daughter would then come into the room and open her mind, as it were, to any floating impression that offered itself, while he and his friends fixed their minds on the chosen topic. On this theory it was unnecessary so to fix the mind, but that, I believe, was what was done. Presently she would describe what came to her. Many of her guesses were amazingly good. She was then told the actual thing chosen, and no doubt she saw it very vividly as it was described to her. She would be keen to know how near she had got to the chosen subject. But that she should see the thing before it was described to her and because it was presently to be described to her, is all of a piece with Dunne seeing the Martinique explosion before the newspaper headings evoked the picture in his imagination. It would be extremely interesting if Professor Murray would try to get scenes to his daughter which would not be revealed to her later. If he failed to do that, it would be confirmatory of this supposition, that what happened was merely the foreshadowing of a strong impression, exactly on the lines of Dunne's anticipatory dreams.

The idea that the mental "now" prolongs itself into the past and future, as the attention flattens down from its waking acuteness into a state of suspense, also brings many of the more remarkable and hitherto abnormal phenomena of hypnotism into line with the general body of interpreted fact. The feats of many of the more successful mediums in producing

the names and significant incidents in the lives of people hitherto unknown to them, but whose names and circumstances they were personally to know, cease to be isolated phenomena. They are no longer in the least discordant with every-day reality so soon as we clear our minds of the delusion that the practical, fleshly, substantial "now" of ordinary experience is a mathematical instant, a locus, an infinitesimal abstraction, and accept the view I am propounding here that it has duration, and that its duration in both directions, past and future, increases with the weakening of our attention and our lapse from acute contact with outer reality.

By this reasoning people must often be dreaming ahead of the winners of races, of winning numbers in lotteries, speculative opportunities and the like. They are. But dreams draw their material not only from the future but from the past, from our bodily desires and cravings, our hopes, our mental preoccupations, and the interpretation and misinterpretation of noises and other impressions. Very rarely have they a convincing quality of reality. The dream artist in us is essentially and incurably unsystematic and maundering. We all, as our attention sinks down towards the threshold of consciousness, become false and incoherent in our associations. Every sleeping, hypnotized, anæsthetized, or dreaming man is, so to speak, insane. Sanity is a waking state. Accordingly, I do not see any prospect of our keeping so sufficiently alive to what we are doing as to direct our minds to

the next big race or the run of the numbers for the next hour at roulette, and at the same time letting ourselves go sufficiently to tap the mental states ahead. Things may and do happen as they happened to Mr. Townley Searle, but such dreams are gifts and cannot be forced or persuaded to come by any means now known to us. Practical life lies in the present. Dream states, like drug states, are a dangerous field of exploration for any but very specially endowed and guarded minds.

*10 July, 1927.*

# XX

## POPULAR FEELING AND THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE. ANTI-VIVISECTION

THERE are some questions that really serve to classify men's minds. Nowadays the popularly received classifications rarely mean anything at all. Are you Republican or Democrat, are you Liberal, Labour, or Conservative? The answer tells you only of accidents of upbringing and circumstance. Are you a Socialist? "We are all Socialists nowadays." Are you a Christian? Yes and no, or a "Yes"—and a long explanation. But these other questions are test questions. Fairly put and fairly answered they reveal the quality—or rather, let me say, the key and colour—of a mind quite definitively. They mean exact things. They show you are this sort of man or that.

One of these test questions is birth control, because on your belief whether that is possible and desirable or whether it is not, hang, logically and necessarily, all your ideas of the competition of types, peoples, and races, and of the possibility of socialism and world peace. If you can believe it is possible then world peace is possible, and if you think it is impossible all talk of world peace is just sentimental foolish-

ness or a humbugging preparation for propaganda in the next war. Another test issue is the question whether the Mass as performed by a properly qualified priest is or is not the central fact of Christian religious life. If your answer is "Yes," you are a Catholic, and if "No" a Protestant. All the other points at issue among the different sorts of Christians are subordinate to that, and you will find that the decisions people make upon them are always more or less clearly consequent upon that primary decision. Your attitude towards education will be different, and towards literature and history. You will face death differently and pain differently. Upon a great multitude of the important problems of to-day you do not know where you are, you are just maundering about, until you have thought out and decided clearly on these two key matters and adjusted your ideas to them.

A third cardinal issue, not perhaps quite so far-reaching in its implications as these others, but very far-reaching, is the question of vivisection. To get your attitude to that quite clear and settled in your mind is—after these other two—as sound and profitable an enterprise in self-examination as it is possible to imagine.

What is vivisection? It is a clumsy and misleading name for experimentation on animals for the sake of the knowledge to be gained thereby. It is clumsy and misleading because it means literally cutting up alive and trails with it to most uninstructed minds a sug-

gestion of highly sensitive creatures, bound and helpless, being slowly anatomized to death. This is an idea naturally repulsive to gentle and kindly spirits, and it puts an imputation of extreme cruelty on vivisection which warps the discussion from the outset. But the larger bulk of experiments upon animals for scientific purposes involve no cutting about and very little pain. Many cause discomfort rather than actual pain. There may be the prick of an injection and a subsequent illness. Wher there is actual cutting it is nearly always performed under anæsthetics, and in a considerable proportion of such cases there is no need for the animal to recover consciousness and it does not recover consciousness.

Still, a residue of cases remains in which real suffering is inflicted. Far more pain, terror, and distress is inflicted on the first day of pheasant shooting every year, for no purpose at all except the satisfaction of the guns, upon the wounded and mutilated birds which escape than is inflicted by all the scientific investigators in the world vivisecting for a year. The lives of "fancy" dogs, again, invalid and grotesque deformations of the canine type, must make an aggregation of prolonged discomfort beyond all comparison greater than that of the creatures inoculated by the physiologist. But such considerations do not release us from the straight question whether it is right and permissible to cut even a single animal about, or indeed to hurt any living creature at all, for the sake of knowledge.

That is what the scientific experimentalist claims to be free to do and which the anti-vivisectionists labour strenuously to prevent. There is no denial on the part of the scientific experimentalist that a certain number of experiments are painful and have to be painful, and that they are of a sort that have to be performed upon animals of an order of intelligence that leaves one in no doubt of the reality of the sufferings inflicted. The large majority of experiments involve no inconvenience to the creatures tested, but there is this residuum of admittedly painful cases. It is an amount of suffering infinitesimal in comparison with the gross aggregate of pain inflicted day by day upon sentient creatures by mankind, but it occurs.

The anti-vivisectionist wants legislation to prevent all experiment upon living things for the sake of knowledge. Failing that he wants to prevent experiment upon dogs in particular, even when the experiment involves no pain whatever to the subject. But you will find that the typical anti-vivisectionist is incapable of believing that an experiment can be painless; his imagination is too vivid for any assurance to the contrary. The idea of living substance cut while it quivers and feels is too powerful for him. When the arguments and imaginative appeals to his agitation are scrutinized it will be found that his objection is to real or imagined pain, inflicted in cold blood to no matter what beneficial end.

That is what he wants to stop. His propaganda

literature is filled with assertions that no knowledge of any value has ever been gained by biological experimentation, but these preposterous denials of widely known facts are the natural and habitual exaggerations of controversial literature. The sound anti-vivisectionist would not rest his case on any such proposition, for, even if it were true, a single wonderful discovery to-morrow would upset it again. Pushed into a corner he will admit that he does not care whether the knowledge gained is worth while or no. He will not have knowledge gained in this fashion.

It would be easy to convict the anti-vivisectionist movement of many manifest inconsistencies, but my object here is rather to disentangle a fundamental idea than to exhibit confusions of thought. I want to disentangle what is at the root of the feelings of the anti-vivisectionist, and not to score controversial points. But I must call attention to the marked disregard shown by the active spirits in this agitation for any sort of experimenting with animals, however productive of pain, that does not produce scientific results. The world of pet animals is a world of aimless experimenting with life. The lives of the "pets" of careless women are for the most part remarkable histories of wrong and excessive feeding and fitful fussing and negligence, and these creatures are themselves, in many of their varieties, products of a ruthlessly dysgenic breeding industry which sacrifices vigour and vitality to minuteness, quaintness,

and delicious ugliness, but the anti-vivisectionist has never shown the slightest disposition to couple this ugly trade in animal deformity with the pursuit of scientific research. Nor does he show any animus against the importation of little monkeys and such-like small attractive beasts, dragged from their natural environment to die en route or perish miserably but "amusingly" in uncongenial and often terrifying surroundings. Indeed, a large part of the social and financial support of anti-vivisection seems to come from just the sort of people who sustain the breeders and procurers of animals for "petting."

But very probably the toy-dog lover does not realize the biological abomination of these practices. In his disregard of possible pain and discomfort in one case and in his exaggeration of pain and discomfort in the other, we find the clue to the fundamental issue of this controversy. The pet is to him a dear little thing and its incessant struggles to breathe with its pug nose are considered to be funny; its fitful appetite is interpreted as fastidiousness; its manifest ill-health is "delicacy"; if it is constantly washed and combed it does not smell and it is a sweet creature; its abject physical dependence on its owner, its terror and hatred of the world beyond the proprietary aura is very flattering and easily interpreted as love. There is the same disinclination to see the realities in the case of the pet dog as in the case of the dog in the hands of the experimentalist, but the disinclination is set at a different angle. The former leads a life of

general discomfort, but it is necessary for the pet-owning and pet-protecting type to think of it as exquisitely indulged; the latter may not suffer in the slightest degree, and may show the friendliest feelings to the man who has made it a contributor to science or may jump on the table eagerly for the injection that is followed by a pat and a tit-bit of food, but it has to be regarded as being thrillingly and outrageously tormented. These, however, are honest delusions, the outcome of a peculiar mental make-up, and the anti-vivisectionist is not to be charged with wilful inconsistency. His or her—it is more commonly her—intention is to prevent and forbid the infliction in cold blood and for a scientific end of anything that looks like pain on any animal that can be imagined to suffer.

The hatred is not against pain as such; it is against pain inflicted for knowledge. The medical profession is massively in support of vivisection, and its testimony is that the knowledge derived from vivisection has made possible the successful treatment of many cases of human suffering. So far as we can measure one pain against another, or the pain of this creature against the pain of that, vivisection has diminished the pain of the world very considerably. But the anti-vivisectionists will hear nothing of that. They will hear nothing of that because it is not material to their conception of the case.

The peculiar animus of the anti-vivisectionist is clearly against the deliberation and the scientific aim

and not against the pain in itself. The general subjugation of animals to human ends is not questioned. Many anti-vivisectionists are, like their pets, carnivorous. They will leave the abattoir to go on when they have closed the laboratory; they will recognize the right and duty of the owner of a big dog to beat his fortunate possession into good behaviour and keep it short of food to tame it. They would be indignant if they were refused the freedom of giving their pets anything to eat that they fancied—provided always that no scientific knowledge ensued from its subsequent reactions. It is the quiet determination of the clean-handed man with the scalpel that they cannot endure.

It is not that he is cruel, because manifestly he is not cruel—if he had a lust for cruelty the richly emotional nature of the anti-vivisectionists would probably understand him better—it is because he is not driven by his feelings or cravings to do what he does, but by a will for abstract lucidity, that he rouses the antagonism, the violent sense of difference, in his "antis." Vivisection is only occasionally and incidentally the infliction of pain, and anti-vivisection is not really a campaign against pain at all. The real campaign is against the thrusting of a scientific probe into mysteries and hidden things which it is felt should either be approached in a state of awe, tenderness, excitement, or passion, or else avoided. It is, we begin to realize, a campaign to protect a world of fantasy against science, a cherished and necessary world of

fantasy.. It is a counter-attack upon a treatment of animals that gives the lie to a delightful and elaborated mythology in which these poor limited creatures are humanized and have thrust upon them responses, loyalties, and sympathetic understandings of which they are, in reality, scarcely more capable than plants. The curious, materialistic, shameless, and intelligent monkey lends itself far less easily than the dog to such mythological interpretation, and so gets far less consideration from the anti-vivisectionists. It pulls everything to pieces, including pleasant fantasies about itself. But you can tell a dog that it thinks and feels anything you like, however noble and complex, and it watches you hopefully and wags its tail. And so it is about the dog that the controversy centres and the passions of the dispute rage most obstinately.

To the question we have posed, whether it is justifiable to inflict pain upon animals if need be for the sake of knowledge, the supporter of vivisection says "Yes." He says "Yes" because he regards the whole animal creation as existing not merely for its present sensations, but as a contributing part of a continuing and developing reality which increases in knowledge and power. His disposition is to see things plainly and to accept the subservience of beasts to man in man's increasing effort to understand and control. He regards animals as limited and simplified cognates of our own infinitely more complex and important beings, illuminating inferiors, and he can

conceive no better or more profitable use for their lives than to serve the ends of mental growth. What otherwise are their lives? A play of desires and fears, that ends in being devoured by other creatures great and small. To this mentality that of the natural anti-vivisectionist is in the completest contrast. The world that the pro-vivisectionist is by his nature impelled to strip bare, the anti-vivisectionist clothes in rich swathings of feeling and self-projection. He imagines souls in birds and beasts, long memories and intricate criticism. He can imagine dogs and cats pressed by forebodings, a prey to anxiety, vexed and thwarted. He does not clearly separate them from humanity. Often he will compare these dream-enriched animals of his with mankind to the disadvantage of the latter. He enriches reality but at the same time he distorts and conceals it by these ornamentations. He is afraid of bare reality as a child is afraid of a skeleton.

The biological experimenter experiments because he wants to know. He is neither dismayed by pain nor does he desire that pain should enter into his experiments. He avoids it when possible. I doubt if his work is largely determined by practical ends, or whether it would have much value if he undertook it directly for the sake of curing disease, benefiting humanity, or anything of that sort. Sentimental aims mean loose, sentimental, ineffective work. He wants knowledge because he wants knowledge; it is his characteristic good. Practical applications follow unsought. He is a type of humanity that may or may

not be increasing in the world. Most of us do not stand up to knowledge like that. We want to keep our illusions. We do not want knowledge for ourselves or others very much, we prefer to be happy in our imaginations, and the rescue of animals from the "clutches" of the vivisectionists appeals to our deep instinctive self-protection quite as much as it does to the widely diffused desire to champion the weak against the strong.

*24 July, 1927.*

# XXI

## THE NEW AMERICAN PEOPLE: WHAT IS WRONG WITH IT?

THE American people is far less sensitive to foreign opinion than it used to be, but three or four letters to this address witness that there are still Americans who want to have themselves discussed. They ask for prophecies of the American future. The demand is too big for me. But, in common with many other English people, I have been made to think rather vividly about certain aspects of the American future in the last few months, and it may be interesting to turn over the convergent reactions and conclusions.

English people will not consent to think of Americans as foreigners and aliens in the way in which they think of Turks or Italians. They have a great and intimate curiosity about things American. It is not always a friendly intimacy they feel; there is a great deal of irritation and hostility both ways. But while an Englishman will never say, "I might be an Italian," it comes very easily to him to say, "I might be an American." Imaginatively he tries on the stars and stripes. He is eager for American plays and receptive of American novels. He can see himself living

like that. Without a monarchy, the "county" and our army people, I do not know how like Americans we English might not be.

American common life is being set down now very ably and vividly by American writers, primarily for the benefit of American readers, but their work is gaining the constantly increasing and constantly more respectful attention of European readers. Until quite our own time, American novels have been, so to speak, European novels about America; they followed European methods and respected European standards. Their characters had a morbid predisposition to cross the Atlantic. But now there is a growing school of American writers who take their own way with their own novel and enviable wealth of material. Sherwood Anderson, Sinclair Lewis, and above all Dreiser, are outstanding examples of this new-won American literary independence, of which Edgar Allan Poe and Whitman were the prophets and Stephen Crane the most brilliant pioneer. Upton Sinclair veils the power of a very considerable writer in the flag of a vehement propagandist, but he too must not be forgotten in the reckoning of America's literary liberation.

"Babbitt" we felt was a great exposition of commercial America seen and written with complete originality, and though many of us found "Martin Arrowsmith" a little incredible and unconvincing, "Elmer Gantry" again has produced the distinctive Sinclair Lewis effect, which is that of looking at a

vividly interesting reality through a lens which refracts and exaggerates indeed, but which may even exhibit all the better by virtue of its magnification. One believes in Babbitt and understands that the American world may be infested by innumerable Babbitts, while at the same time one may doubt whether there was ever quite such a Babbitt as Babbitt. "Elmer Gantry," which deals with the popular religious life, is even more like seeing through the curves of a bottle. It has the quality of veracity. One feels, that is to say, that what is seen in it is truly there; that it is not "made up." But also one feels that the thing seen is different in its proportions. The story is universal. Where there is revivalism and popular missioning, whether it be Catholic or Protestant, or "New Thought" or No Thought, there is the same danger of reaction between the "magnetic" preacher type and the excitable woman convert or associate. But the scale of the development is distinctive because of the entirely unprecedented social atmosphere in which it goes on, and there lies the major interest of the European observer.

The first quality that impresses the European is the abounding vigour of the social life these books reveal; the next is its immense crudity, and hard on that its lack of variety in culture and the absence of half shades, a sort of universal black and whiteness. Everybody seems to think the same things and to express them by the same common idioms. Henry James, in his all too rarely cited book, "The American

Scene," complains of his native land as he saw it in 1909, that "nothing in the array is 'behind' anything else—an odd result, I admit, of the fact that so many things affirm themselves as preponderantly before." "Babbitt" and "Elmer Gantry" tell of a world that must be on the street line or perish. With the book in hand one might say, "This is a community wholly without criticism," which would be to ignore completely the existence of the book in hand. But it is a community in which criticism and the idea of dropping out of the front line to think about things is evidently only beginning.

An American novel of outstanding power which is being read all over Europe with great curiosity and admiration is Dreiser's "An American Tragedy." Dreiser is, in the extreme sense of the word, a genius. He seems to work by some rare and inexplicable impulse, enormously, without self-criticism or any fun or fatigue in the writing. Long ago I admired his "Sister Carrie," and rebelled against his long novel, "The Genius," surely the largest, dullest piece of ineptitude that has ever been produced by a first-class writer. His "American Tragedy," still vaster, is —I agree with Bennett—one of the very greatest novels of this century. It is a far more than life-size rendering of a poor little representative corner of American existence, lit up by a flash of miserable tragedy. But I would disagree with Bennett's condemnation of its style. It is raw, full of barbaric locutions, but it never fatigues; it keeps the reader read-

ing, it gets the large, harsh, superficial truth that it has to tell with a force that no grammatical precision and no correctitude could attain. Large, harsh, and superficial that truth is, and fresh from this book I am moved to express something about America that has been smouldering in my mind for some time.

Let me set down two impressions of a very intelligent French reader of these representative books. The first impression was one of the wide freedom of movement and the universal restlessness of these common people, compared with the rooted, limited lives of their European equivalents (so far as they can be counted as equivalents). The next, and the stronger, was the extreme thinness and poverty of their mental life. We were in the presence of a people with no depth of conversation at all. They had no variety nor penetration in their discussion. They had no poetry whatever. They did not seem to know the names of, or ever to have observed, any birds, flowers, minerals, or any natural things. They had no metaphors, but slang phrases horribly bent and flattened by excessive use. They betrayed nothing a European could recognize as religion and no general ideas of any sort. Their revivalism was the cheapest, shallowest orgy of mass emotion. They knew nothing of any literature. They read so badly that their news had to be shouted at them from the tops of columns. The poverty of their language was amazing. The lover wrung to ecstasy might say: "My! but you're cute." The phrase for all occasions seemed to be

"That gets me!" My French observer insisted that here was a people degenerating, worn down, halfway back to speechlessness and brutishness. We had a long argument, because I am still a backer of the United States, and in the end we both gave ground.

I had to grant the flattening and cheapening of the language, but it was arguable that that was a phase. Two-thirds of the surnames in Dreiser's book were Central or Eastern European names. These people were newcomers; they had left Polish, or Czech, or Yiddish, or German behind them, and the names of flowers and legend and metaphor had been also left behind. There had been a vast mental attrition during the process of transplantation to a new soil. No real attempt had been made to assimilate them to any conceivable American culture. Was it any wonder if they dealt with each other through a cheap sort of English, tenses and moods all wrong? And, moreover, they were still unsettled, moving over a big area, where flowers and suchlike poetic material varied. People do not pick up the phraseology for that sort of thing *en route*. And just as their native languages had worn off in the rub and movement of immigration so too their native faith and traditions had been rubbed down to something very cheap, thin, and raw. But that was only a phase of clearance. Stripping is not degeneration. Clearing a site is not decay.

So I argued. The antagonist, however, scored points by demanding what, if there was a clearance, was being built in the clearing. Where were the great

vigorous schools and colleges in which the new culture was to arise? Where were the signs of a copious cheap literature of high quality? One had glimpses of American college life, and the quality of the new civilization brewing there was, well, questionable. America, said my friend, was a new thing in the world, a vast possibility, a hope for all mankind. The schools, the colleges, the popular literature, the intellectual leading of such a community, if it was indeed to realize these hopes and achieve its destiny, had to be far stouter, bigger, and better things than poor old muddling Europe could show. Were they even as good? The travelling Americans one met in Europe seemed, when it came to any abstract discussion, to be far less able to express and handle ideas than their European equivalents. But that brought down the talk to individual instances, in which no argument is ever possible.

I turn back to Henry James. He describes a long journey from north to south. He speaks of "the general pretension of the Pullman, the great, monotonous rumble of which seems for ever to say to you: 'See what I'm making of all this, see what I'm making, what I'm making . . .'"

To which in his character of returning native he replies: "I see what you are *not* making, oh, what you are ever so vividly not, and how can I help it if I am subject to that lucidity?—which appears never so welcome to you, for its measure of truth, as it ought to be!"

I still hesitate to adjudicate. I hate to cheapen, or even to seem to cheapen, the immense achievement which America embodies in material form. But I could wish for better evidence than these novels and the general report of things over there give me, of a great and unprecedented movement throughout that community towards sustained intellectual activity on a scale commensurate with American opportunity. Things, it seems to me, stand very much as follows. The common schools of a number of States in the Union (but by no means all) are perhaps as good as the elementary schools of Britain and Germany. No better. Yes, but for the peculiar needs of America they ought to be four times better. Children do not go to school so regularly as they do in Western Europe, and they ought to go more. America is rich enough to keep all her children at school until sixteen, learning to use their own language fully and skilfully, learning the elements of science and something sound and solid about the rest of the world. She does nothing of the sort. Her educational progress is shallow and pretentious. It is decades behind her material progress. The Fundamentalist controversy displayed great areas of the United States as being mentally twenty years behind Western Europe. She ought to be handing out to her people all the best literature of the world, good scientific works and modern discussion at a quarter of a dollar or less for a full book. We can do that in England, but in America books of that sort cost anything from one dollar to twenty. Common

people in America and their children must read old, worn books or none. She is, in fact, building the great nation of the future on a foundation that would be thought insufficient even for an effete and tradition-cemented European community. This will not do. She has to see to that. If she does not see to that all her large promise is in vain. But the growing volume of self-criticism in America, of which the books I have cited are only samples, is a very hopeful sign that she will see to it. The sooner she sets about seeing to it good and hard, the more cheerfully will my hopes for America go about in my mind.

But the job is no slight one. If it is to be done at all, a very great effort indeed is required. The universities, book distribution, and above all the common schools in America must have something like a renascence before the atmosphere of "An American Tragedy" can be pushed out of reality into history, and the American people take the place its material advantages offer it of leadership among the nations of the earth.

*15 May, 1927.*

## XXII

### OUTRAGES IN DEFENCE OF ORDER. THE PROPOSED MURDER OF TWO AMERICAN RADICALS

One of the most intriguing phenomena of the present time is the increasing readiness of the supporters of established institutions to use violent and illegal methods against anything that seems to threaten these institutions. Law and Order have become excuses for lawlessness and crime. The gravest threats to freedom and progress, personal security and security of property, have come in late years far more from within established institutions than from without. In crimes against life, truth, personal honour, private freedom, and legal rights, the professional "rebel," though by no means an angel, finds himself a poor second to the responsible administrator, the judge, the official, and, above all, the conservative "strong man." The instances multiply. They vary from the grotesque to the sheerly horrible, from the ridiculous burglaries of the British Government up the scale to prolonged torment and murder. At present the western world is confronted with a case altogether typical of this paradoxical resort to evil on the part of those who are supposed to be its pro-

fessional antagonists—the case of Sacco and Vanzetti, in Massachusetts. It is an affair more dismaying from some points of view even than the long tale of atrocities on which the Fascist dominion in Italy rests to-day. It calls for the closest study on the part of every one who is concerned with the present development of our civilization.

I will state the bare, indisputable facts of this amazing case. They do not admit of contradiction; they are matters of common knowledge. I quote them from a small, generally accessible book, "The Case of Sacco and Vanzetti," by Professor Felix Frankfurter. He is far abler and far better qualified to deal with such an affair than I can hope to be. Intellectually and politically, he is a figure of the utmost respectability. He is Professor of Administrative Law in the law department of Harvard University; he was Assistant Secretary of War at Washington during the war. He has come into the affair from no motives but the interest of a specialist, the passion of a good patriot for the honour of his country, and the indignation and pity of an honest man. He has made an exhaustive study of all the evidence and records in the trial, and he has presented the results with extreme lucidity. Before his intervention William G. Thompson, a great Massachusetts lawyer, had already taken up the cause of the two miserable defendants. And these are the essentials of this abominable business as these two have laid them bare.

Sacco was a worker in a shoe factory in Stoughton,

Mass.; Vanzetti was a fish pedlar. They were arrested and charged with participation in a "hold-up," involving the murder of a paymaster and his guard, and the theft of a box containing about sixteen thousand dollars. It was a hold-up in broad daylight, the victims were shot, the box was snatched, and the murderers made off in a car. The evidence for the presence of the two accused upon the scene of the murder, when one examines the record, is contemptible. It is manifestly, to any one who has assisted at police court proceedings, that sort of cultivated evidence one gets out of unintelligent witnesses by pestering and pressure long after their real testimony has been exhausted. One poor woman, for example, who saw the scene from a window at a distance of thirty yards or more, who had a second and a half to observe a car passing at fifteen or eighteen miles an hour, and who refused at first to identify Sacco, was induced after a year of police education to describe how in that brief interval she had remarked the peculiar shape of his forehead, the distinctive length of his hair, and the particular size of his hands.

On the other hand, the evidence that both of the accused were elsewhere is sound and convincing. The murder was committed at Braintree, in the outskirts of Boston, at 3 P.M., and an official of the Italian consulate in Boston witnesses that he was visited by Sacco, who was seeing about his passport to Italy, at 2.15 on that day. Vanzetti, the prosecution maintained, was, as various customers testified, with

Italian duplicity, selling fish far away from the place where he was simultaneously committing murder. On the evidence for an alibi alone, the active complicity of these two men in the Braintree crime would have been laughed out of court in any unimpassioned trying of the case. The rest of the case for the prosecution is as contemptible. It is a feeble and tortured attempt to convict. No traces of booty, no association with any murder gang, no contributory facts of weight sustain the contention of the prosecution.

But this is not all. It is not merely that these men have been found guilty contrary to the weight of the evidence so far as it concerns themselves; they are held guilty, and they are to be executed on July 10th next in the teeth of the fact that a Portuguese named Madeiros subsequently confessed, and that the real murderers are quite clearly indicated. Professor Frankfurter names them and demands their prosecution. Is this too incredible for the reader? Let him read the Professor's dispassionate statements. I do not see how any clear-headed man, after a reading of the Professor's summary, can have any other conviction than that Sacco and Vanzetti are as innocent of the Braintree murder, for which they are now (after seven years of prison hardship and mental torture) awaiting death, as Julius Cæsar, or —a better name in this connection—Karl Marx.

But why then are they to die? The clue to the riddle is to be found in the cross-examination of Sacco by District Attorney Katzmann, and in an illuminating

remark made by one of the jurymen in the case. This murder, it must be understood, occurred as long ago as April, 1920, near the height of the great "Red" scare in the United States. It was a hot time for any miserable worker who had involved himself with Communist or even mere Socialist propaganda and organization. Sacco and Vanzetti, honest, industrious, worthy men in most other relations, as the assembled evidence shows, were—radicals! They were pacificists and Socialists. They seem to have been connected with a certain Salsedo, whose wickedness may be judged from the fact that in the general "drive" against the Reds he was arrested by the United States Department of Justice, put in a room on the fourteenth floor of a Park-road building, and then found dead on the sidewalk below. Evidently a desperate bad character. Perhaps he fell in an attempt to climb down from the fourteenth floor; perhaps he did not. These two men were certainly associated with him; they had taken part in pacifist and socialist activities. Sacco, drawn to fight in the Great War, had evaded and gone to Mexico, and Vanzetti, in addition, had spoken at meetings against military service, and the prosecution directed itself less to the trifling matter of the Braintree murder than to these facts.

Mr. Katzmann's method with his victim was to worry him about his evasion of military service during the war and about his Socialist views. To go on worrying and wearying and provoking him, with his

imperfect knowledge of English, until he blundered into phrases and statements that would be acutely offensive to the carefully selected jury. Before a jury of inflamed Massachusetts patriots, Mr. Katzmann's ideas of fair play allowed him to ask these poor devils whether they *loved* the United States, whether they thought the United States a free country, whether they were disappointed by the United States, whether they subscribed to newspapers likely to be distasteful to the jury, whether they were sympathetic with anarchists, and so forth, and so on, and Judge Thayer, the presiding judge, instead of kicking a prosecution of this quality back to the proper charges, aided and abetted these foul irrelevancies.

What had these disputes to do with the plain question of murder with violence before the courts? The prosecution, says the "Yale Law Journal," was allowed to ask, "at a time of intense popular feeling against anarchists and all opposed to the established order, questions emphasizing in a picturesque and telling manner the political views of a defendant on trial for a crime which admittedly had not the slightest relation to these views."

That was the spirit and method of this trial. The quality of the jury at which this stuff was aimed may be judged by the fact on record that before the trial Ripley, the foreman, said to a friend who doubted the guilt of the accused: "Damn them, they ought to hang anyway." These two men were in fact condemned not as murderers, but as socialists and

pacifists, and it is as Socialists and pacifists that they are to be killed in July. The pro-killing party in the United States hardly troubles to maintain the flimsy story of their murder guilt. The Braintree murder is indeed merely a legal fiction in this case like the John Doe and Richard Roe of various old-fashioned English legal instruments. If it can be used to kill Sacco and Vanzetti, then I do not see why it should not become a standard legal form, and why any other people in the United States whose opinions are considered to be unsound, whose presence on earth is regarded as unpropitious, or who have got themselves disliked in any way, should not presently be included in this murder case and sent after these first victims to the electric chair.

The facts of the case are now so patent and so widely known that no American citizen from the President downward who studies the evidence has any excuse for pretending to believe that Sacco and Vanzetti had hand or part in the Braintree murder. The case has passed out of the purview of courts and persons, and become a challenge to every American citizen. The fact, plain as day and staring the world in the face, cleared of all prevarications and pretences, is that the greatest, most powerful, and modern state in the world is now confronted with the question whether it will or will not permit these men to be killed upon a false accusation because of their political views. Is their blood to stain Old Glory?

I will say no more of Sacco, the factory hand, and

Vanzetti, the pedlar of fish, who have been doomed to die lest America fall. I turn to a much more intricate and interesting figure, Judge Thayer. These others are just confused, common back-street men, but Judge Thayer is a type. After reading Professor Frankfurter's book through I went to and fro in it, picking out everything I could about Judge Thayer. My curiosity grows. I would like to study him intensively, get photographs of him, dive into his life story, learn about his school and college. And that, not because I think he is anything strange and out of the way, but because he is so tremendously normal. I perceive that he was in perfect accord with the District Attorney, Katzmann, and in close sympathy with the jury, when Sacco and Vanzetti were, not so much tried, as baited in his court. He had no feeling of wrong-doing at that time. "Thayerism," if he will permit me to draw a word from him, is no rare thing in America. Nor is it rare in England. It interweaves intimately with the mental quality of the European Fascist. It is a widely diffused and dangerous force in our modern world. "Thayerism," the self-righteous unrighteousness of established people. Let us consider its more salient characteristics.

In the first place, after my first exploration of Judge Thayer, I am left with the persuasion that he is, legally speaking, a quite honest man. That is to say, I do not thiink that he was guided by any considerations of personal profit to take the line of conduct that is making him Stupor Mundi, the amaze-

ment of the civilized world. I think that he and his jurymen had a feeling of profound obligation to their country, and that they really supposed that they were serving great civilized ideals in doing as they did in the conviction of their victims. I am not so sure of the District Attorney. I thought his cross-examination tricky and evil; but then I am accustomed to the candours of science, and I find most lawyers in most cross-examinations tricky and evil. But District Attorney apart, the court, I am convinced, felt that it was making a large fair display and doing helpful work to maintain the good life, the spacious and generous and wholesome American life, by accepting proofs that were no proofs against these friendless men—who "deserved to be hanged anyway." I feel sure that the Judge went home to his family—and I can quite believe he has a very nice family—with a sense of a stern duty manfully done.

After the trial I agree that his record is not so straightforward. The criticism of his verdict seems to have surprised and hurt him. He must have felt that he had settled this business for his country's good, and that he did not deserve the trouble made about his settlement. His conduct suggests wounded vanity and bad temper rather than any Satanic qualities. People came into court and hurt his feelings by motions for a new trial, which he refused indignantly. The Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts, without inquiry into the evidence of the murder, but simply upon legal issues, upheld his right to block a

retrial. It still upholds him. To the last application based upon the Madeiros confession of 1925, after studying the motion "for several weeks without interruption," he produced an opinion of twenty-five thousand words. Professor Frankfurter describes it, with manifest deliberation of phrase and with all the weight of a trained critic of just this sort of material, as "a farrago of misquotations, misrepresentations, suppressions, and mutilation." I quote without endorsement this opinion.

I believe Judge Thayer's conduct of the original case was entirely honest; and if his final opinion hardly comes up to the standards of that high word, it still remains, for most fallible men, a very human and sympathetic effort. What is the matter with Judge Thayer is not that he is a bad man, not that he is antimoral, but that he is—to put it mildly—extremely obtuse mentally and morally. This mental and moral obtuseness seems to have extended to his court and to a considerable body of opinion in the United States which sustained him in his crushing of these two unfortunates.

It is difficult to say just how far that obtuseness does not extend in our English-speaking communities. Many people in the continent of Europe hold that it is innate, that the American and English are by nature stupid people, acting often with clumsy and unintentional cruelty, and missing the point of most issues. That stupidity carried with it a certain obduracy which in many rough practical issues has the effect

of strength. But the writing and acts of Judge Thayer and his District Attorney indicate considerable acuteness and liveliness. I do not believe they are naturally dishonest or stupid. I am quite willing to credit them with intelligence, integrity, and public spirit. But it is crude intelligence, dull integrity, and sentimental public spirit. They have under-developed minds; the minds of lumpish, overgrown children. They have had no fine moral and intellectual training. They have lived in an atmosphere where there is no subtle criticism of conduct and opinion, where everything is black or white, bad "to be hanged anyway," or good to be given every privilege. Everything is overemphasized. To be bad or wrong is not to be against the law on this issue or that; it is to be outlawed and not given a dog's chance. It is to be hounded down. They have acquired no pride in discrimination or exactitude. They are easily prejudiced violently for or against anything, and they are as incapable of behaving with scrupulous fairness to any one who they think is in the wrong as they are capable of the sloppiest adulation and indulgence for any one they think is in the right. In religion they have never learnt to distinguish cant from faith, they are the natural prey of Elmer Gantry and his kind, and in politics and social questions they cannot distinguish honest criticism of their fundamental ideas from aimless malignant wickedness. They are not mentally quickened to the point of generosity; they are blind to the pathetic idealism of these poor aliens in their midst;

they have panics against dreaming workmen who can scarcely talk intelligibly; they see red and feel murderous. And they mean well!

They mean well. That is the tragedy of this situation. The Judge Thayers of our world, just as much as the Saccos and Vanzettis, want the world to be fair and fine. The motives on neither side are entirely base. But Thayerism has the upper hand, and it is all too ready for hasty conclusions even if they involve blood sacrifices. Too many Americans, I fear, believe that a little blood-letting is good for their civilization. So did the Aztecs before them. But blood is a poor cement for the foundations of a civilization. It is less a cement than a corrosive. There have been civilizations before the present one in America, and for all the blood they shed so abundantly upon their high places they have gone and are buried and stuff for the archæologist.

Six weeks still remain for justice and pity. Will the mighty and fortunate United States, perhaps the greatest power in the world to-day, allow the State of Massachusetts to kill this machine hand and this fish pedlar on the charge that they have committed a crime of which all the world now knows them innocent, or will it, at the eleventh hour, induce the Governor of that State to put an end to their seven years of misery and hardship in some more gracious fashion?

Sacco and Vanzetti were not executed in July; they were reprieved for a special inquiry until August

10th. On the eve of that day they were again reprieved for a further twelve days until the United States Supreme Court could decide upon certain points of law that still remained unsettled. No legal power existed outside the State of Massachusetts to avert the infamous conclusion. They were electrocuted on August 22nd.

*29 May, 1927.*

# XXIII

## SOME PLAIN WORDS TO AMERICANS. ARE THE AMERICANS A SACRED PEOPLE? IS INTERNATIONAL CRITICISM RESTRICTED TO THE EASTWARD POSITION?

THIS paper is addressed primarily to certain American correspondents, but it discusses a matter of considerable interest to all English-speaking readers —namely, the right of British and European people generally to have and to express opinions about American affairs. The converse right has never been questioned, and is exercised freely by Americans throughout the world.

In this article I maintain my right as a free-born Englishman to think freely about the affairs of the United States, and to say what I think to be true and right and proper about all or any of these affairs. I refuse to regard the people of the United States as in any way a Holy People. It is not blasphemous to deny them perfection. It may even be wholesome that their present great exaltation of spirit should be tempered by criticism. And if I have anything upon my conscience with regard to the United States in the past, it is that my disposition has been more consistently favourable and flattering to the American

tone, the American quality, and the American future than the present ungraciousness of these correspondents of mine justifies.

True that when first I crossed the Atlantic some artless comments of mine offended Boston. There has always been something a little difficult between myself and Massachusetts, some incompatibility. New York I loved frankly, and Chicago amazed me. I left verbal instructions that the ashes of my heart were to be thrown into the Potomac where Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia meet; but Boston I found refined and genteel and sensitive beyond my capacity. Everybody admired the Winged Victory and had a replica of it somewhere. I had never encountered such a serried unanimity of culture before. I made remarks about it, and about Longfellow's house. I began wrong perhaps by going to Boston in a Fall River boat with my cabin near the syren, and spending the next day sceptically in an open automobile exploring the wildernesses into which Boston was proposing to expand. I doubt it ever will. And now again my trouble is with the supercivilization of Massachusetts. All the haughtier letters I get in this correspondence come from that State.

My gravest offence, I gathered, lies in this, that together with two other miscreants, to wit, one Arnold Bennett and one John Galsworthy, I did wantonly issue a manifesto or appeal upon the issue of the Sacco and Vanzetti trial while it was still in

suspense. For myself and my associates I object to every word in that indictment. We were approached severally by an American gentleman, bearing one of the greatest names in the history of American science, and himself of respectable academic standing, and asked to sign an appeal to Governor Fuller which he put before us, and I, at least, was given to understand that this was to be an extensively signed document not confined to English or American opinion. We were not so pontifical, therefore, as we seemed to be. In fact, we were not pontifical at all. We responded to an American invitation and did not expect to be treated as principals but as chorus in the matter.

Still, that is a minor point. I signed that appeal very readily, and, later on, when the execution occurred, I expressed an opinion about it, an indignant opinion, for which I had ample justification in the facts as they had been put before me from American sources. From the examination actually quoted to me, I was impressed by the extravagant unfairness of the questions put to the accused, and by the way in which, being charged with ordinary murder and robbery, their political opinions were dragged into court to create a prejudice against them. I was concerned about the moral quality of the court far more than about the moral quality of the accused. I wrote an article upon this, which did not get all the publicity I had hoped for in America. The question of whether these two Italians were guilty or innocent I made a secondary matter. The thing that scandal-

ized me was that they should have been tried in such a fashion.

Now for six years before that, although I was frequently hearing about it vaguely, I had left the Sacco and Vanzetti affair alone as no concern of mine. It is only recently that I have been roused to the realization that it is a case like the Dreyfus case, by which the soul of a people is tested and displayed. I had supposed it to be a row between the "Reds" and the authorities, and I had assumed that the accused were involved in some political or semi-political crime. I am not a "Red," though a number of people I have stung by criticisms they could not answer in any other fashion have sought comfort in calling me that. I have criticized Communism with a passionless destructiveness far more deadly than the mere brawling abuse of Moscow habitual to these people who denounce me. And it was only when I found that two men, who might or might not be murderers and robbers, were being tried as though anarchist opinions and murder were interchangeable things that my sense of intellectual decency was aroused.

It was my friend H. W. Nevinson who induced me to look into this case more closely, by a review of a book by Mr. Felix Frankfurter. His précis was so startling that I got the book itself forthwith and read it. It was manifestly a very honest and competent book, and its exposure of the prejudice imported into the case by the prosecution amazed and

shocked me profoundly. I inquired further who this Mr. Felix Frankfurter might be. He was, I discovered, a member of President Wilson's government, and he is now Professor of Administrative Law at Harvard. This seems good enough to go upon. The Communist movement had seized upon this trial and made it an occasion for demonstrations and outrages throughout the world. The favourite rôle of the extreme Red seems always to be that of agent provocateur for reaction. The extreme Red is the curse of creative liberalism. But the misbehaviour of excited crowds here and there has nothing to do with the essential offence of this case, which has been stated for history and all time by Frankfurter. Frankfurter is no more a Red than I am, and had as little to gain by taking up this unpopular case. He took it up because it shocked him, and he imparted his shock to me. The trial and the manner of the trial are the facts that most concerned him. There they are.

Now the curious thing is that a great number of Americans do not seem to see in the least what is the point at issue. They do not get, many of them do not seem able to get, what it is that has roused the liberal opinion of all Europe against the courts of Massachusetts. There is a profound psychological difference laid bare in this case.

The guilt or innocence of these two Italians was not the issue that had excited the opinion of the world. Possibly they were the actual murderers, and still

more possibly they knew more than they would admit about the crime. Seven years after the crime the Massachusetts police (who have certainly been as much on trial as the actual murderers) produced new and very impressive evidence against Sacco and his associate. They exhibited a bullet which they depose was the bullet found in the body of the victim, and a pistol, which they testify was found upon Sacco at the time of his arrest. The particular bullet is shown conclusively, by a quite beautiful piece of scientific analysis, to have been fired from that particular pistol. This must have been very decisive with Governor Fuller's committee of inquiry. But these facts were not before the court in the original trial, and, anyhow, they have nothing to do with the monstrous way in which the politics of the accused were dragged into the case. That, I urge upon the American reader, is what perplexes Europe. Europe is not "re-trying" Sacco and Vanzetti, or anything of the sort. It is saying what it thinks of Judge Thayer. Executing political opponents, as political opponents, after the fashion of Mussolini and Moscow we can understand, or bandits as bandits, but this business of trying and executing murderers as Reds, or Reds as murderers, seems to us a new and very frightening line for the courts of a state in the most powerful and civilized Union on earth to pursue.

So much for the Sacco and Vanzetti case. I realize the electric storminess that broods over it. Wrathful Massachusetts citizens write to me that they have

"consigned" various of my unimportant writings to "the garbage can," and have otherwise treated them with contumely. I am to be barred and suppressed by a hundred million true Americans. This is melancholy news for me, but of no great importance to the world. The fact remains that these indignant letter-writers are still in the same world with Frankfurter's book and that if they do not read it in this world, its careful perusal will almost certainly be one of the first purifying tasks set them in the next.

Well, life must go on, and the Braintree case must be left now on the receding beaches of history. After this article I shall write no more about it. And here, indeed, it is not about this case that I am writing, but about the extraordinarily bad temper certain types of Americans display at the mere shadow of its discussion—and, indeed, of any discussion of things American. One can scarcely let a sentence that is not highly flattering glance across the Atlantic without some American blowing up. No other people have so acute a sensibility. This Sacco and Vanzetti business has merely brought this testy impatience to a head. I have spent only a few months of my life in America, and I am always careful to base such comments as I make upon America, upon American authorities. Upon prohibition my silence has been monumental; it is an affair for Americans only. But many other matters are not entirely their affair. For example, it is a matter of concern to the whole world that the general level of education in America should be high. That is another

matter on which I have offended, and shall continue to offend. Drawing my instances from American writers, I have pointed out on diverse occasions that the level of elementary education in America is not high enough for her immense possibilities and her limitless aspirations. It is no answer to say that it is as high as it is in most European countries. My answer is that it ought to be much higher because of the immense wealth, power, and opportunity of the United States. I regret I have not saved the whole mass of ill-written, abusive retorts this friendly and helpful reflection has provoked.

The other day, again, I lectured at the Sorbonne on the necessity of democracy entering upon a new phase. I was considering European conditions, and I do not think I even mentioned America, but apparently the word "democracy" infringed the sacredness of the American tradition, and Senator Borah went up with a loud report. I was reminded as a Briton of many humiliating things, and particularly of my financial mismanagement of the war situation, which left Senator Borah so much up on me. Yet I am doing my best to pay off Senator Borah, and I have never complained. And the insufficiency of the American common school is a danger to the peace of the world.

This disposition to answer back hotly and irrelevantly is not confined to Senator Borah and my mail. Several newspaper articles to my address have instituted painful general comparisons between English and American ways. One writer lays much stress on

the alleged British habit of playing tennis, taking a bath, and putting on the same underclothing again. This may be all right; I have never searched my fellow countrymen, but personally I don't pay tennis in underclothing. Anyhow it doesn't matter very much. I admit the immense superiority of Americans in most things; to mention only a few, they win hands down on films and flivvers, steel construction and advertisement, debt collecting and floral offerings, Bunker Hill and bathrooms. American architecture is superb. Their novels are becoming more interesting than British novels, and London, I understand, is full of their plays. If no American alive can write anything to compare with the storm in Tomlinson's "Gallion's Reach," yet Stephen Crane came nearest to it in his "Open Boat." The variety of type in the American population, as compared with the British, is as fifty to one. America invented flying. Oxford trousers, again, were a plagiarism from America. I could go on for quite a long time jotting down similar glorious points for Old Glory. But I do not see what such things have to do with my articles. I was not at Bunker Hill when Senator Borah, I gather, stormed that position and licked chaps like me to hell. The question of the conduct of a public trial or the value of an educational organization or the imperfection of an electoral method of government is not settled by vehement reminders of a critic's nationality and its associated disadvantages—especially when he happens to be the most cosmopolitan-spirited of critics.

The friendly European critics of the United States are impressed by the facts, first, that the elementary education of the American citizen is cheap and poor and does not fit him for his proper rôle in the world; next, that the methods of democracy used by the States are crude and ineffective, and that they hamper the moral and intellectual development of what is still the greatest, most promising of human communities; and thirdly and finally, that the American sense of justice is clumsy and confused. It does not dispose of such criticisms to say that they come from a poor boob, or that all the world outside the States is just a wilderness of poor boobs. True, no doubt, as that is, and salutary as it is to repeat it, nevertheless it leaves the American defects untouched.

The people of the United States has become very rapidly in the last fifty years the most secure, wealthy, and powerful nation of the world. It is high time its citizens displayed a self-complacency commensurate with this achievement. It is all very well for a touchy little people on the defence to fly up at the mere hint of criticism, but not for the proud citizens of a great empire. Far be it from me to institute vexatious comparisons between Europe and America, but there does seem to be a clearer sense of the freedoms and frankness permitted in discussion on this side of the Atlantic. It has been possible in the past for Americans to discuss the rights and wrongs of British justice in Ireland, India, and Egypt without provoking vehement denials of their liberty to do so. The late Presi-

dent Roosevelt offered the most striking and uninvited advice to English liberal thinkers upon the subject of the Empire. When the British liner, the *Titanic*, went down, the Americans, I recall, held officers and crew for a perfectly gratuitous inquiry before releasing them for the proper legal investigation by the British Board of Trade. There was no fuss on these occasions about "alien intervention" in England, we appreciated the advantage of having our concerns viewed from a fresh angle, and unless we have touched sore consciences, I do not see why the simple response of Bennett, Galsworthy, and myself to an American question should evoke these present transports.

It was precisely because we were not American that we were invited to give an opinion on the Braintree case.

Whatever may be the outcome of this present little affair, I am afraid the Americans, like the rest of the world, must be prepared for an increasing amount of criticism and intellectual and moral intervention from foreigners. The world becomes more and more one community, and the state of mind of each nation has practical reactions upon all the rest that were undreamt of half a century ago. The administration of justice in Massachusetts or Italy concerns me almost as much as the administration of justice in London or Glasgow. Particularly when the lives of aliens are involved. Belligerent teaching in the school-books of France or Germany or America, or a failure of China

to unify and protect itself against military adventurers, may lead to the deaths of my sons and the destruction of nearly everything I hold dear about me. The world becomes my village, and whether Senator Borah likes it or not, part of me walks down Main Street and defies all America to expel it. Conversely the voice of Senator Borah reverberates in Dunmow, and is heard along the Maritime Alps. America is part of my spiritual home and Old Glory one of my quarterings. I have a loyal feeling for the American eagle. It is so loyal a feeling that I cannot bear to think of that bird as anything but aquiline. I want to think of it as that aspiring eagle with the open wings one encounters first on the caps of the officials as one steams up the exhilarating approach to New York. An eagle like a victorious invitation. I do not want to have that vision replaced by the butt view of a proud but isolated ostrich, invincibly immense, which has swallowed all the gold in the world and is now keeping its head resolutely buried in the sand.

*16 October, 1927.*

## XXIV

### FUEL-GETTING IN THE MODERN WORLD

Our modern world runs on fuel. It burns its way through the years. The ancient civilizations made no such use of combustion. A few sticks kept the pot boiling, and a bag of charcoal served the purposes of the smith. Torches and oil lamps were convenient but not indispensable. Man set fire to his world seriously only 200 years ago.

The tradition is, therefore, that coal and oil are commodities like marble or leather, to be bought and sold in the same fashion, chaffered over, refused, or withheld. Quite insidiously they have become fundamental necessities for our social and economic order, but the old ways of dealing remain. We still treat them as incidental commodities. Perhaps the old methods have hung about too long. We may be on the road to very profound changes in our dealings with oil and coal.

In America the more prominent issue is oil. Both here in England and in America, "Oil," Mr. Upton Sinclair's book, in spite of his peculiar methods of advertisement, has crept insidiously and surely to a success. I find quite a number of my friends reading it. I see strangers reading it in the train. Evidently

people want ideas about oil. In Britain the more urgent aspect of the fuel question is the coal-mining issue. The General Strike, following the coal lock-out of 1926, settled nothing. In the Labour débâcle that ensued the miners lost most of the points they had fought for; they had to accept longer hours and a lower standard of living, and the industry readjusted itself to the conditions of a declining industry. It has continued to decline. There remain great numbers of miners unemployed, and profits are unsatisfactory. Coal trouble is becoming the chronic ailment of Great Britain.

There was a phase in the British coal drama when coal production was subsidized. I believe that for the effective, permanent re-establishment of British prosperity there must be a return to subsidized coal. It is the only way of reconciling two otherwise incompatible needs, an abundant cheap supply of the various sorts of coal needed for British shipping, transport, and industrial activities, and a decent standard of life for the body of men needed to win the coal.

No doubt, to those who hold to the old-fashioned way of regarding coal as something you can do without and still play your part in life it is shocking to think of the community paying for coal to be sold again at a loss, for that is what the subsidy amounts to, but to any one who grasps its altered status as a social necessity it will be no more shocking than the abolition of toll-gates and the provision of high-roads at the common expense.

Suppose the coal supply firmly established on a subsidized basis and the subsidy counterbalanced by a countervailing duty on the export of coal—because there is no reason whatever why the British taxpayer should pay in part for the coal consumed by the foreign industrialist—what would be the effect upon the community as a whole? Manifestly there would be a cheapening of transport, a stimulation of the metallurgical industries, a cheapening of the cost of power, and either a reduction of wages or an elevation of the standard of life of the ordinary worker, enabling him to spend the money he would save on coal on manufactured goods. I cannot imagine anything but a general stimulation of the entire economic life of the community. Cheaper transport and cost of production would invigorate the country's competitive export of manufactured goods and in its turn react upon the coal industry with an enlarged demand for coal.

Naturally a subsidized undertaking will mean a controlled industry; there is not the slightest benefit to the community if either coal owners or coal merchants are allowed to intercept and absorb the subsidy. A subsidy means compounded royalties, restricted profits, and scientific direction. And as naturally the recognition of coal-mining as a public service will change the status of the miner.

The present condition of the mining worker has been the result of slow developments, and like most social arrangements that have grown up slowly, it is a thoroughly bad complex of laws, customs, and

tolerated conventions. Only usage blinds us to the absurdity of a system by which a man who has specialized in coal-winning, and who is ready and willing to go into the mine and win his stint of coal for the community, should not have every facility given him to discharge his task. It should be possible to calculate the cost to the community of a miner from his birth to his death; it should be possible to charge up to him his schooling, housing, keep, holidays, recreations, police protection, medical attendance, funeral, grave, and everything else he requires and consumes. Against this it should be possible to set as an equivalent so many tons of this or that sort of coal. If he wins less than that he is a parasite; if more, he is robbed. And equally it should be possible to make his stint of coal-winning easy and convenient for him, instead of leaving it as laborious, uncertain, vexatious, and humiliating as it is now.

It is the business of a civilized community to determine that equivalent between coal and consumption, and arrange for the miner to justify his existence as a consumer as easily and pleasantly as possible, slowly or quickly as he chooses. If he sees fit to work like the devil, long spells and all the year around, and get it over and be assured of all his elemental needs thereafter for the rest of his life, while he meditates, goes or walks, paints pictures or writes poetry, he ought to be able to do so without making existence intolerable for a fellow-miner with a more leisurely conception of his life-work. A modern civilized commu-

nity ought to be able to cater for its labourers on such flexible terms. It ought to command sufficient intelligence to estimate ahead what it will want in the way of coal, and enlist its miners on long-term agreements for a definite amount of work that will make them as safe in their jobs as civil servants.

We are so used to the scrambling quality of life, as we know it, to the desperate grabbing and holding of scraps of property, to strikes and lock-outs, to unemployment, fluctuating prices, speculative cunning, uncertainty, servitude, and frustration, that few of us succeed in realizing that these things are not now necessary. However unavoidable they may have been for mankind in the past, they are not now unavoidable. The chancy and disagreeably adventurous way we live is not the only possible nor the best way of living. It is a phase out of which our race may pass.

The reason why our community cannot figure out what the life task of a coal-miner should be is simply because it does not know enough about things that can be quite effectively known. It cannot figure out even its broad staple needs and supplies and be certain of them as yet, even within quite wide limits. So we have to guess and gamble our way through life, to overcharge and underpay and "keep on the safe side." We hoard if we can. We think ourselves lucky if we can saddle the world with a debt for the loan of our hoarded accumulations. We cannot imagine freedom and independence except in the rôle of a well-secured creditor. Again, we have to fall back on

the gold standard for monetary purposes because we have not the necessary facts for a regulated currency, although theoretically a regulated currency is a far more desirable thing than a currency resting finally for its sanctions on a brute quantity of gold. We not only live in anxieties that could be dispelled; by virtue of this same ignorance, we sicken and die of diseases which might have been prevented or cured. We are still as much the prey of chance as any other animals. All our lives are worried, shadowed, belittled, and laid waste by the preoccupations arising out of the lack of that comprehensive knowledge without which the sane and comprehensive direction of human affairs is impossible.

Now what I am writing here of life, its present uncertainty and disorder, is to be found in the lamentations of the preacher and in the pessimistic literature of the Egypt of five thousand years ago. The reader of Breasted's "Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt" will find passages about human life that say exactly what my last paragraph repeats. But what is new, what we have clear in our minds to-day, is the growth of a body of knowledge charged with the promise of order and assurance to replace these ancient distresses. Then, indeed, the world was limitless and dreams of control absurd. Now, in the last three centuries, we have begun the surveying and mapping of the whole planet. After contours and topography follow geological surveys, biological exploration, climatology, economic appraisal. As the

surveyor advances the prospector disappears. We are bringing all the material basis of human life into the sphere of the calculable. We are numbering the people, always an annoying process to the ancient gods. In quite a few years we shall know within quite small limits the population of the world and its rate of increase; we shall know, within the limits of a few hundred tons, its annual requirements of wheat and rice, steel and coal, cotton and wool. We shall know how and where to get these and all other staple commodities. We shall be able to work out the whole processes of getting and distributing the material requirements of human life upon lines not of commercial adventure, but clear certitude. We shall have a grip upon disease, of which our present attempts at public and world hygiene are only the faintest first intimations. And the little scattered band of meteorologists who now observe and guess about the weather will have been reinforced and developed into a big, competent, world organization, which may even forecast our crops and anticipate our shortages within a continually closer margin of accuracy years ahead.

Do not the achievements of science in the past two centuries fully justify what I have written here? And if this is so, and if there is this clear prospect of a world in which we can plan out the general activities of mankind on estimates, trustworthy to within a very small fraction of the total amount, is it conceivable that any of the main disputes of our present economic world-scramble will survive? You may call me a

dreamer in these matters, but it is not I who dream, it is you, who are not properly awake to what man has done and what man can hope to do.

I wish my wakefulness was more contagious than it seems to be. Britain the Sleeper mutters "Muddle through" in its sleep, and will not open its eyes to the facts that are in the same room with it. The heavy industries of the old country grow heavier and heavier. Unless those drowsy eyelids can be lifted, unless Britain can rouse itself—within a very brief term of years—to meet the irksome demand for more knowledge, more science, and more imaginative courage, it must sink into a permanently inferior position to the United States of America and to a renascent Central Europe. Leadership is for those who will lead, and the direction in which the world has to be led is manifestly towards the systematic control and stimulation of the production of basic substances in the common interest. Production primarily for profit in raw materials and basic substances, like the mere commercialization of the transport services, works out in the crippling of the higher types of industrial life. The movement for the conservation of forests and other national resources from the recklessness of unbridled private enterprise in America, with which President Roosevelt identified himself, was merely one early recognition of what is now becoming a widely recognized truth. With the development of material civilization and the accumulation of exact knowledge, the concern of the com-

monweal spreads into fields that were once left quite legitimately to adventurous exploitation. For Great Britain, in respect to fuel, the issue is now a vital one. Either she must prepare to subsidize and then nationalize her coal supply, or she must face the clear prospect of retrocession from her position of leadership in the world.

*30 October, 1927.*

# XXV

## THE MAN OF SCIENCE AND THE EXPRESSIVE MAN. TO WHOM DOES THE FUTURE BELONG? SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT IVAN PAVLOFF AND GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

I HAVE before me as I write a very momentous book. It is entitled "Conditioned Reflexes," and it is by Professor Pavloff, of Petrograd. It is not an easy book to read but it is not an impossible one, and when one has read, marked, and learnt, one finds—I find—that one has at least attained the broad beginnings of a clear conception of the working of that riddle within us which is perpetually asking us riddles, the convoluted grey matter of the brain. The book is translated by Dr. Anrep of Cambridge and it is published by the Oxford University Press with the assistance of the Royal Society.

Quite apart from its subject this book is a very reassuring book for those whose hopes for the future of mankind are bound up with the steadfast growth of scientific knowledge. It gives in broad outline the substance of nearly twenty-five years of wonderfully imagined and marvellously conducted research. That research was carried on in a city that changed its name twice, from St. Petersburg to Petrograd and

from Petrograd to Leningrad; it saw flood, famine, war, and revolutions; there was a great shortage of medicaments and scientific apparatus, and one winter the whole city was well-nigh frozen to death through want of fuel and people went out after midnight to steal the wood blocks out of the roadway for their stoves, but the work went on. It is true there appears a gap in the number of publications cited from between the years 1917–1920, but this was due largely to the interruption of the paper supply in these years. The deficiency was more than made up by the reports of results that came out in the subsequent years when the tide of paper flowed again.

There is something vastly heroic in this persistence and something profoundly significant in the respectful cessation of political violence in the precincts of the Institute of Experimental Medicine.

It happened that when I was in Russia in 1920 I visited Professor Pavloff and saw something of his work. I remember that the corners of his study were piled high with potatoes and turnips he had grown in a patch of earth outside his laboratory, and dug up and brought in. He remarked casually that that was how he took his exercise nowadays, and that was all the notice he gave to the immense political and social stresses of the world about him. He went on to talk about the more permanent realities with which he was dealing and took me through the ingenious building in which he and his little band of assistants were conducting their researches. I saw the dogs on which

he was working. They did not seem to be in the slightest degree uncomfortable; they wagged their tails, and he patted their heads. He explained as much of his methods and ideas as he thought my unspecialized mind could grasp.

He was a brownish-faced, gentle-mannered man, with brown eyes and a general cast of countenance that reminded me of portraits I had seen of the late Lord Kelvin. He showed a lively interest in the explorations he was conducting, and he did his best to make his points clear to me, without any attempt to astonish me by any sudden strangeness of statement or epigrammatic gymnastics. He was pleased, I think, to get some one from outer Europe again asking him questions. He spoke of the work of other people and particularly of Sherrington without any note of rivalry or attempt to caricature; he spoke of them as collaborators and collateral explorers in this great work of illuminating some of the obscurest niches of the world of reality. Never in a moment in his talk did he seem aware of anything besides his subject, and least of all was he aware of himself. He seemed in another world from any thoughts of personal competition. He embarked upon no praises of Sherrington. Merely he spoke with respect and interest of his work. To have raised the question of whether he thought Sherrington or himself the greater or more remarkable would have been like letting a drop of ink or mud fall into a glass of clear wine.

My sense of the man's simple greatness returns to

me as I read this skilful patient piecing together of fact and inference and question, doubt, experiment and conclusion for the third of a lifetime, which supplies the matter of this book. And as I read I am reminded of a vehement outbreak I recently provoked in another great man I know, a man for whom I have an admiration and affection at least as strong as I have for Professor Pavloff, though my admiration is of an entirely different quality, George Bernard Shaw. I recall that Professor Pavloff is one of the greatest of vivisectors—"these scoundrels" Shaw called them—and that according to Shaw it is his habit to boil babies alive and see what happens. Queer that one fine man should write so of another! In that screaming, wildly foolish denunciation of vivisection to which I refer, Shaw, just to give his readers an idea of what vivisection meant, described one of the villains as chopping off the paws of a dog one after the other to observe its behaviour, and as being quite surprised to find that after his fourth operation there were no more paws. And suchlike platform stuff.

It is interesting to compare the reality of vivisection as it is given in this book. For the most part the amount of operation performed involved far less temporary suffering for the animals than lies at the door of any "dog-lover" who has the ears of a Belgian griffon docked, and the vast mass of the experiments and observations recorded required as a primary condition that the animals should be altogether calm

and comfortable. The distraction of even a slight pain or any alarming or distressful circumstance would have inhibited altogether the delicate responses to stimuli, upon which this great mass of new knowledge has been erected. I know it will outrage the dearest feelings of the anti-vivisector to say this; it is his peculiar delight to gloat upon imagined "tortures," but this book is available for the judgment of the intelligent reader. One dog Pavloff describes incidentally as jumping into the stand, impatient for what any hearty anti-vivisector would no doubt describe as its "torment."

But when I set out to write this article I did not intend to touch so definitely as this upon the delicate sensibilities of the anti-vivisectionist, probably the most indefatigable and fiercest of all epistolatory creatures. That issue is a little off my present track. I had in mind the remarkable contrast of these two eminent figures, both in their way commanding my admiration and both in their way very sympathetic to me. I come somewhere between them; in my humbler measure I partake a little of both. I do not know what Pavloff thinks of Shaw, probably about as much as he does of the "proletarian science" of Moscow, but we have Shaw's ringing "Scoundrel!" for Pavloff properly on record. I have been amusing myself for some minutes with that old game of the One Life-Belt. Probably you know and play that game. You put it as a problem rather after the fashion of the Doctor's Dilemma; if A. is drowning

on one side of a pier, and B. is equally drowning on the other, and you have one life-belt and cannot otherwise help, to which of the two would you throw it? Which would I save, for example, Pavloff or Shaw?

I do not think it would interest the reader to give my private answer. But while I was considering it I was manifestly obliged to ask myself, "What is the good of Shaw?" And what *is* the good of Shaw? Pavloff is a star which lights the world, shining down a vista hitherto unexplored. Why should I hesitate with my life-belt for one moment?

To begin with the elements so to speak, Shaw writes English extraordinarily well. I feel a sort of benefit of clergy attaches to that alone. Pavloff translated by Anrep is rather clumsy reading and I doubt if that is altogether the fault of Anrep. I doubt if Pavloff is much of a writer. Sometimes I try to write English, and I am always keenly interested in the writing of English, and I am even interested in the writing of stuff about the writing of English, and I know enough of the business to know how beautifully it is done by Shaw. And he walks about writing in a little note-book, avoiding passers-by with remarkable skill, and presently he produces, out of his head and out of his vivid misconceptions about life, shows for the theatre of the brightest, liveliest, freshest quality, so that there is nothing quite like them in the world. "John Bull's Other Island" and "Androcles and the

Lion" and "Saint Joan" float off from reality like vast soap bubbles, reflecting it in vivid patches, curved and brightened, iridescent and delightful. And he talks incessantly, and a larger proportion of that talk is fun of the very best quality than is found in the talk of any one else on record.

Moreover, he has invented a most amusing personal appearance: he is an adept at gravely absurd conduct, and his extraordinary industry in sitting to painters, photographers, and sculptors will fill the museums of the future with entire galleries of his portraits, medals, statues, and busts. All the rest of us will be rare in comparison. The likeness varies with the artist, and it is possible that contrasted series of these representations will be ascribed to different contemporary reputations which have been less sedulous for physical record. It will be incredible that one single man could have sat so persistently. Some will perhaps be attributed to eminent vivisectors otherwise undocumented. So Shaw may even defeat his end of individual assertion and become the general type of our time. But certainly he is the greatest living artist in expression, in self-expression, and he does it so excellently that it seems ungracious to raise the question whether he has ever had anything but himself to express.

But with the life-belt in my hands and Pavloff, so to speak, splashing, it is a question I must raise. What has Shaw added to our arsenal of ideas, to our

store of knowledge, to the illumination of the world? Has he been more than a confusing commentary, a gesticulating shadow athwart light not his own? He has been a prominent Socialist. What is there in Socialist thought, what contribution, or correction, or deflection, to which one can attach the initials of G. B. S.?

He has been a mighty reverberator for Samuel Butler's self-consoling detraction of Darwin. He has restored the inheritance of acquired characters by proclamation, and he has co-operated with that equally vigorous expressionist, Mr. Belloc, in proclaiming Darwinism—whatever it is—extinct. He has made a free use of the phrase the "Life Force," but what meaning he attaches to these magic words is unknown. He expands the word Will on the lines of various nineteenth-century German thinkers. He seems to be suggesting at times that man can do anything by merely willing it, but whether that is possible on any dietary or only upon vegetarian nourishment, and whether it can be done without apparatus, is never clear. He has an aversion from sex and children which may be either Butler or temperamental, and he seems to want mankind to try laying parthenogenetic eggs, and coming out of them fully whiskered. I doubt if there will ever be this will to the egg on the part of mankind. And in his wonderful prefaces—as good as the best Dublin-brewed talk they are—he has made a vast jungle of shrewd commentary and dogmatic statements that collectively

amount to somewhere in the region of nothing at all. It is interesting to read these prefaces and the rest of his abundant controversial literature, and note how inevitably he slides away from any general question to issues of motive. If he has no visible antagonist, he invents one. Just as he shirked all the issues of vivisection by describing imaginary monsters of stupidity and cruelty, so always he has dressed a punching dummy for every view he has assailed. It is not because he is a dishonest controversialist, but because he is incurably a dramatist, that he does this. The poverty of his abstract thought assures the excellence of his plays.

People call him a thinker. I doubt any consecutive thinking at all. Most intelligent men have their ideas in some sort of grouping and order, even if it is no more than the order of a patchwork quilt, but I do not find even that much coherence in Shaw. His ideas are a jackdaw's hoard picked up anyhow and piled together anyhow. Knowing my Shaw fairly well, and knowing his surroundings, I think I could trace to some intimate personal influence nearly everything he has ever held. This he got from Samuel Butler, and that from Webb; this he expanded from a chance remark by Haden Guest, and that was loaded into him by one of Mussolini's sedulous propagandists. The worst element in his mental make-up is a queer readiness to succumb to the poses of excessive virility. His soul goes down before successful force. He exalted the maker of enormous guns in "Man and

Superman"; he has rejoiced in the worst claptrap of the Napoleonic legend; now he is striking attitudes of adoration towards the poor, vain, doomed biped who is making Rome horrible and ridiculous to all the world. When it comes to the torture of intelligent men, to vile outrages on old women, to the strangulation of all sane criticism and an orgy of claptrap more dreadful than its attendant cruelties, this vituperative anti-vivisectionist becomes an applauding spectator. So he is welcomed to Italy and fêted in the sunlit streets along which other less fortunate intellectuals have been hurried through the darkness to an ignominious death. What does it matter to him that the shadow of destruction creeps closer and closer to so great a man as Ferrero? What does it matter that the soul of a whole people is dishonoured and bowed and bent? To him it does not matter, because his thought is too trifling to apprehend the threat this triumph of base violence conveys to the whole world of man. He is taken and subdued by posturings that outdo his own, and his political thinking, like his thinking about life and medicine, brings him at last to no better end than a defence of impudent quackery.

Empty he is as few of my contemporaries are empty—yes; but he echoes most sonorously in his own cathedral-like emptiness, and his outward effect is striking and entertaining, not simply to himself, but to us all. He resembles an iridescent film upon the pool of life, and Pavloff, a great stone built in and

built upon, and so completely incorporated that his name may have become hardly more than a name, widely forgotten. To the future Shaw will have contributed nothing, and yet he may be harder to forget. We can know what Pavloff knows now if we will do the necessary reading of him, but a hundred years hence industrious students may still be discussing whether Shaw meant this or whether he meant that, or whether he meant anything at all. Unless, that is, still more Shavian Shaws, still emptier, still more resonant and preposterous, have swamped their attention by that time and obliterated him altogether.

Empty and sometimes intensely vexatious, and yet I think that like Belloc he is playing a very necessary rôle in the intellectual world. Scientific men are apt to forget their obligations to the general intelligence of mankind. Though nobody acknowledged the indebtedness, it was Belloc as much as any one who shook up the biologists at the recent meeting of the British Association to tell us less mumblingly than they have done for some time how matters stood with them about Natural Selection, Darwin and the Origin of Man. And while I find reading Shaw is like shooting rapids in sunshine, Pavloff-Anrep, though, as Baedeker puts it, "rewarding," is very heavy going, a deep dark gorge of thought. I wish men of science would express themselves better. Scientific inquiry takes its workers into remote and lonely places where they do a little lose the faculty of ordinary speech. Our interest in scientific work and sound thinking

might fade out altogether if the mental irritation of these expressionists did not keep our attention alive.

And with these few remarks, which I hope may prove helpful, I will hand the life-belt to the reader and repudiate any further responsibility in the matter.

*13 November, 1927.*

## XXVI

### THE FUTURE OF THE NOVEL. DIFFICULTIES OF THE MODERN NOVELIST

My distinguished and, I gather from a convenient autobiography, incomparably clever junior, Lord Birkenhead, has recently been abusing me in speech and book. With the deep parental bay mingles the sharp undergraduate bark of Lord Furneaux, his promising son. It seems to be a family affair. Some answer is desirable. I do not see why I should pretend to a high and mighty line with these gentlemen and affect a disregard I do not feel. What they have to say is interesting and worth discussing.

Lord Birkenhead would be impossible in America; the American lawyer at his wickedest is still a pompous concealing sort of figure, but Lord Birkenhead has displayed a disregard of personal dignity that verges on the outrageous. He is the gamin of Lord Chancellors, the bright promise of a better age when, in the midst of robes and dignities, the man will be, if anything, rather more the man for "a' that." No public figure in America would dare to bend and unbend like our Lord Birkenhead.

This biography I speak of ("Lord Birkenhead," by

"Ephesian"), since it contains precise details of its hero's early earnings, anecdotes of incidents at which "no reporters were present," and so forth, must either have been written from his direct inspiration or by some intensely familiar spirit, and it exhibits as smart a specimen of the "Card" type as the world can ever honestly wish to see. No end of a fellow he is, and we are told with immense detail and appreciation how he called Judge Willis to his face in his own court a "garrulous old county court judge," and snapped back at a witness who had mentioned the village idiot, "I see—a relation." Much more of such brilliance. Among the cherished testimonials—they began early, for the wet-nurse came near to foretelling the Woolsack and school governors said, "Watch him!"—I find myself on record as declaring that he is "the greatest man in England." If I did I was unconscious at the time or talking of somebody else. But manifestly there are lots of other people who did say it. Mr. Asquith, "in the presence of Mr. Balfour," came near it, and it will be easy to substitute a better name for mine in a later edition of this revealing book.

Lord Birkenheard, one learns, is not only a great success as a lawyer and politician, but a very important figure in literature, and by way of proof I have before me a copy of his "Law, Life and Letters," two handsome volumes, as dignified anyhow as paper and print can make them. They are mostly what a journalist would call articles, but I suppose for a writer of Lord Birkenhead's standing we should substitute

"essays." One or two I judge to be after-dinner speeches rather too faithfully reported. They are done in a prose of the kind that in the last century was known as *Telegraphese* and carried to its highest levels by Mr. George Augustus Sala, a fine fabric of ornate but familiar phrases which produces an effect of strength and dignity and makes little demand for close attention upon the reader. Occasionally, indeed, one finds an arresting sentence. For example, in discussing the murder of a girl of sixteen, he writes: "The mother of the murdered child stated that, although living with her at the time of death, the girl had been brought up by another person whom her husband on his deathbed had asked to undertake the guardianship of her child." That pulls up the reader for a moment and makes him think. But for the most part the stuff flows without an interruption, easily and as one might expect, like the procession of a judge on circuit with the street well cleared ahead.

Much of his matter concerns the greater figures of our time, "The Truth about Margot Asquith" or "Milestones of My Life," for example. Other of the articles deal with the practice of the law in its spicier aspects, and others again with political issues. I have heard about Lord Birkenhead from his youth up as a great controversialist, and I refresh my mind with a brilliance—"brilliant" is his peculiar adjective, and I make no apology for its frequent repetition—that middle age has scarcely dimmed. To a protest that the Bolsheviks are not all robbers and assassins, for

example, he retorts in big print that has all the effect of a deafening shout, "THEY ARE." Simply that. How warmly every one who agrees with him will agree with him on that point! In a crowded court or a public meeting I have no doubt that shout would have been decisive; only a still more energetic man with very stout lungs indeed would have had a chance against it. But the written word does not triumph and pass; it remains for further consideration. This is just one of several passages where I find the habits of the successful speaker carrying the less habituated writer beyond the recognized discretions of the writer's art, of which he is an amateur, brilliant, of course, but an amateur. It is not for me to question the truth about the lady he calls Margot Asquith, or to comment upon the rough fun of the law courts over this or that wretched misdemeanour, but I have a certain claim to discuss a literary matter. He embarks upon criticism and lays down the law about the novel, and I find it pretty bad law. When this glittering torrent of prose comes into my own quarter and even with a certain clamour invades, so to speak, my individual courtyard, I feel that any failure to put in an appearance might be misconstrued.

Lord Birkenhead, brilliant advocate that he is, confuses the issue a little by personal invective, but it is easy to disentangle it again. The issue is whether it is permissible and desirable, in a novel of contemporary life, to name and let one's characters discuss, as I have done in "The World of William Clissold"

and "Meanwhile," prominent living people. The irrelevant attack consists in the assumption that this was done deliberately and meanly as a whet to promote the sales of the books. He represents me as "persuading" my publisher to call attention to those personalities, out of which I "make my living." This is evidently a naïve transference of Lord Birkenhead's own relations with his publisher and his public to my case, and he will no doubt learn with surprise that I have practically nothing to do with the methods of the firm to whom my agents, Messrs. A. P. Watt & Son, nowadays entrust the issue of my books in Great Britain, and that in the case of the two novels in dispute my only intervention was a protest at the stress that was being put upon the matter in question. But I will not dwell upon that. The question of real names and real people in a book is of much more general interest, and since it affects the whole future of the novel, it is worth some further discussion.

The tradition of the English novel is, I admit, dead against me in this matter. The English novel as we knew it some fifty years ago was excessively pseudonymous. This extended not only to persons but places. The lovers would meet in "the little village of X." Hardy wove a fabric of fictitious lives across Wessex, and even such respectable places as Dorchester and Winchester take on an *alias*, and add the excitement of identification to the natural interest of the story. I have never been able to share in that excitement. I do not see why a town exactly like

Dorchester, intended to be recognized as Dorchester, and identified with Dorchester, should not be called Dorchester forthwith and have done with it, just as I do not see why Mr. Arnold Bennett, when he writes about the Five Towns, does not call Burslem, Burslem, and Newcastle, Newcastle. The older novelists so far as place names went were more downright. At all times and in all novels whatever London has remained London and Paris Paris. I recall no instance of London being masked as Georgetown, let us say, the great capital of Bingland, or Paris being thinly veiled as Seineville. Dickens varied in his practice, but his disposition was to be frank about his topography. Mr. Tulkinghorn was killed fairly and squarely in an identifiable house in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and Took's Court is hardly so much disguised as misspelt Cook's Court.

To-day the scene of the English and American novel becomes realistic in everything but the actual foreground. There we have the parlour of No. 7, Blank Street, or the chancel of the parish church of Dashington, but the trains run fair and square into Liverpool Street or Paddington, and the eloping pair get off the afternoon boat at Boulogne and catch the train to Paris in strict accordance with the time-table. If the heroine sticks her head out of the carriage at Grosvenor Road and says "Good-bye, dirty old London," no Lord Birkenhead hectors the author for "making a living" by an illegitimate and unjust criticism (thrust into the mouth of a character who is

a mere mask for himself) of the cleanest, etc., etc. The common sense of the reading and critical public has long ago accepted the necessity of putting "real places" into fiction under their proper names and of admitting comment on and discussion of them. Why should there be any objection to the same thing being done with the cardinal figures in the contemporary social landscape?

To answer that is to realize very extensive changes that are in progress in the common texture of life to-day. In the days of Jane Austen it was possible to write a novel, giving the mental life of decent folk in England, with not a glance at political, social, or economic changes. Life and its processes had such an air of established stability upon her countryside that it was possible for her to ignore the battle of Waterloo and disregard the infinitely remote social distresses of manufacturing England. Life went on inside a frame of public events so remote that no connection was apprehended between the two. If the squire babbled politics, what he said mattered no more than the odd things said by his lady when she had a fever. And even in the great novels of the Dickens-Thackeray-George Eliot period, in Flaubert, in the chief novels of pre-revolutionary Russia, the march of large events was so remote that it could be still treated as the stars or China or the structure of the atom are still treated to-day, as irrelevant altogether. Even wars could be kept "off stage" in novels in English, at any rate until 1914. When they come in, as the war in North Italy

comes into some of Meredith's novels, they come in *externally*, as scenery, as an uncontrollable outer event with which the action of the novel has no connection. The common flow of human life—and therefore the normal novel—was going on right up to the opening decade of the twentieth century, with slight and negligible reactions to formal government or conspicuous personalities. To-day that is no longer true.

To-day, just as the world is growing smaller, as people say, because communications grow more rapid, so also public and collective life is growing intenser and penetrating the private individual life more and more. We ordinary people are in closer touch with the direction of affairs, and it with us. The personalities concerned are not only more clearly and fully known, but they react more upon us. And the drive of change is far more perceptible. Institutions and standards that seemed to be established altogether and completely unchallengeable in the novel of fifty years ago are now challenged and changing; and the discussion of such changes, which was once unthinkable for ordinary people, is now a determining factor in their lives. People like Lord Birkenhead complain that in my novels, instead of picturing life, I discuss it. I certainly have it discussed. It is impossible to picture contemporary life without discussion. People who are not discussing now are not alive. No doubt it is hard to report people thinking in character as well as acting in character, and I admit I do it at times atrociously, but it has to be done. I plead the

pioneer's right to be clumsy. Better be clumsy than shirk the way we have to go.

I happen to have lived as a novelist through the dawning realization of this change in the relations of private and public events, and to have felt my way before I saw it clearly towards the new methods this change has made necessary. I began, when I found that I wanted to convey the social scenery and put in some of its more characteristic peaks and prominences by the old-established method of the more or less modified real person under a false name. I have found that method out. It is an utterly rotten method. It had been practised by the masters before me; compare, for example, the Marquis of Steyne in "Vanity Fair." Let me give quite frankly a particular case of my own. My chief character in "The New Machiavelli" was an ambitious young man who came into Parliament with the big Liberal wave in the opening decade of this century. Such a young man was bound to get into some relations with the Fabian Society and to be in touch with and meet and get points of view from Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb. They all did. The influence of that house in Grosvenor Road was immense. If that phase was to be left out the story would get so out of drawing as to be unreal. Well, I hold now that I ought to have put these two people into my novel by name, just as I put in the Speaker or Palace Yard. They were just as much a part of the scene. Then I should have treated them discreetly and properly. People in my book might have abused

them, or people might have praised them; it would have been fair and square. But, under the influence of the old tradition, I put in some people in the place of the Webbs, rather like them, but not exactly them. These phantoms who were like, but yet not identified with my friends, got worked into the story. One was amused to invent things about them, and one did so because one had released oneself from direct statement. They are not the Webbs, but only Webby people. I succumbed to the temptation of making it rather a lark. But every one recognized the "originals," so what was the good of the sham concealment? Every one said, naturally enough, that I had made a malicious caricature. (In fiction all caricature is called "malicious," which is where Law gets the laugh of us.) Except Mr. and Mrs. Webb, who took it very cheerfully and charmingly and refused to make a quarrel of it to please their ardent friends. And there was a Balfouresque Mr. Evesham too in that novel. And these quasi-Webbs and this quasi-Balfour set all the hunters of "originals" agog to hunt identifications up and down the wretched book. Heavens! the bore that has been to me! For years I could not write a book without having half the characters identified each with a dozen different "originals." And any figures left over at last, bless their hearts! were me.

The *roman à clé* is not the way to handle the political novel. But if we are not to put in prominent people under false names, we must put them in under their own names or destroy the reality of the human scen-

ery altogether. There is nothing left for the novel nowadays but crime and adultery, if public life, economic forces, and the highly individualized personalities directing them are to be taboo. That is how the novel has gone in France. I do not believe it is the way it is going in England.

In brief, the difference between the modern novel and the novel of the last century is this, that then the drive of political and mercantile events and the acts of their directing personalities scarcely showed above the horizon of the ordinary life, and now they do. My refined contemporaries who explain to interviewers that there is nothing real in *their* novels are not really keeping close to simple humanity; they are merely keeping on the old course while humanity turns into the new.

So it is that when my Lord Birkenhead comes home weary to his fireside after calling some eminent fellow-lawyer an old fool, or deriding the Labour Party, or insulting Russia, or otherwise bearing the heavy burthen of imperial responsibilities, he no longer finds his former pleasure in my work. He goes through "Clissold" and finds himself mentioned, indeed, but not as "Ephesian" would do. He reads "Meanwhile" and finds himself not mentioned at all. The way I deal with Mr. Baldwin makes him indignant. I cease to be the solace of his exhausted mind. He gives me up. He casts me aside and reads other novelists. He thinks so little about me nowadays that he breaks out about it in speeches at literary dinners

and drags it into these physically imposing volumes. I have become so unmentionable upon his domestic hearth that even the shrill, small voice of Lord Furneaux echoes that magnificent disregard.

I hate not to be loved. I was happier in the old days when, on every occasion of encountering Lord Birkenhead, he recited the same obvious compliments. But I do not think the development of the modern novel will be retarded very much by his aversion.

*11 December, 1927.*

## XXVII

### IS A BELIEF IN A SPIRIT WORLD GROWING? WHY MANY SENSIBLE MEN CONTINUE TO DOUBT AND DISREGARD IT. WHAT IS IMMORTALITY?

A NUMBER of people, including many whose intelligence and achievements in other directions one is bound to respect, believe and carry on a propaganda to spread their belief in a world of spirits, disembodied human beings for the most part, in fact what we used to call ghosts, which exists invisibly and intangibly side by side with our world of commonplace things, but which is capable of slight but significant physical and mental interference with this material, everyday, daylight world.

This belief, or something very like it, has been held by a certain number of people in nearly every age. One can trace it continuously through the last three centuries. It has always been stoutly denied by a considerable number of people and generally disregarded by the mass of active human beings. In earlier times, the powers of the spirits invoked by the necromancers seem to have been greater than they are to-day. They could inflict serious physical injuries and associate themselves with a cult of witches and warlocks, unpleasant in their habits and now happily unfashion-

able. Then they were more generally respected. They were respected rather than liked. The chief solicitude of the believer seems to have been to find expedients to keep them at a distance. But now they have mended their manners, and the chief solicitude of a number of people seems to be to develop this intercourse even at the price of very considerable fatigue and boredom.

Why is there so general a disregard now of allegations which, if true, should have the profoundest reaction upon our whole lives? Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir Conan Doyle ask this question in tones of natural astonishment. They have produced evidence of the real existence of this other world which they believe to be convincing. Sir Oliver Lodge has drawn back the veil on a sort of sublimated Hampstead, and Sir Conan Doyle has drawn back quite a number of veils. His latest book records the communications of an individual named "Pheneas," through various media, to himself and his family, and he asks me to note the extraordinary quality and significance of the mind of Pheneas thus displayed. I am sorry to say I can find none of the qualities Sir Conan seems to expect me to observe. Pheneas seems to me a platitudinous bore and a reckless maker of vague promises. Ever since the end of 1922 he has been promising wonderful changes for the better in human life and knowledge, "the biggest thing in the earth's history" and so forth. Well, here is Christmas, 1927.

Now I hate to seem derisive of two such men as Sir

Arthur Conan Doyle and Sir Oliver Lodge. I know something of the trade of story-writing, and I acknowledge Sir Conan Doyle as a master. I can peep up at the scientific achievements of Sir Oliver Lodge. But in this matter of the ghosts they put the evidence before us and invite us to judge for ourselves. *A priori* I find their ghosts and their ghost worlds incredible. And when they produce their evidence to convince me that this queer extra-existence does go on, I am bound to confess I find it unconvincing.

Now the fact that I find the ghost world revealed by these gentlemen far less attractive than an everlasting peace does not prove that such a world does not exist. It may be my fate to follow our old friend E. W. Hornung into that world of vague featureless satisfaction and hang about spots of "light" in order to transmit to earth through unattractive strangers the startling news that "This is wonderful," and that I am "sorry and realize things" (never explicitly stated) now. I may be brought to confess that "I like this place. There is peace here, and beautiful vibrations. God bless you" (five times!), and suchlike maunderings. But I want very sound evidence indeed that this dismal substitute for the pungent liveliness of our present existence, its tender and flaming moments and its sweet earthliness, awaits me, before I resign myself to it, and so we come down to the material proofs.

I have done my best to sample the very large mass of records available. No doubt I start with a bias

against the evidence, and that the reader must allow for, but I have been prepared to go on into the details of any group of investigations that produced a *prima facie* case. But I find that I am not given phenomena that I can scrutinize, recall, and examine in any way that pleases me. I am asked to make immense concessions before the evidence can be put before me. A person called the Medium, it is explained, has to be considered. He or she is the material vehicle of the phenomena. Most Mediums have been caught cheating. This, I am to grant, may be due to a peculiar temperamental weakness frequently associated with psychic gifts. Or to nasty, vulgar, *bad* ghosts.

I am to believe my eyes and ears. When a conjurer seems to me to take a large new-laid egg out of the top of his head, I am allowed to say that he has successfully deceived me without pretending to know how the trick was done, but when an entranced Medium produces the pet name of an old schoolfellow long deceased out of *his* head, I am asked to believe at once in all the explanations he gives of spirit controls, high and low spirits and so forth, unless I can trace every step by which he came to utter a name he had no right to know.

Moreover, I must go into favourable rooms for the phenomena and sit for a long time in a light so bad that it is the next thing to complete darkness. I must be still and not hostile. I must sit there until my fagged attention wanders. Many people must sleep at séances. But they never mention it. And dream.

Possibly as they expect to dream. I must not complain if after some hours of such horrible boredom nothing ensues. I must be "fair" to the spirits and try again.

In some slightly incoherent way these moral and intellectual revelations of the ghosts which reveal nothing, which at best touch trivially upon quite minor matters in the intimate life, are inextricably mixed up with queer material phenomena. These are "materializations."

Most Mediums are committed to these material phenomena, and by them their reputations stand or fall. There is this "ectoplasm," which is our earthly foretaste of the wonderful loveliness of over there. Queer stuff, sometimes queer-smelling stuff, is exuded by the Mediums in the obscurity, often rather disagreeably. Its texture and appearance varies very greatly. This exudation defies all our daylight experiences of physical and chemical phenomena. It leaps in its character across gulfs that it has taken normal life vast ages to traverse. It becomes organized, in a few minutes, we are assured, as skin, muscle, nerve. It takes on the character of limbs, of heads, of entire quasi-human beings who move about.

Artists, like John Tissot, attending such séances have put on record their impression of these exuded beings in all their dignity and beauty. In Paris an International Metapsychic Institute has been endowed for these experimentations, and the late Dr. Geley, a man of high scientific standing, produced a consider-

able book giving cases in which beautiful beings from another world have been exuded by Mediums, snapshotted in all their beauty and returned again through the pores and passages of the Mediums into that marvellous other world.

I have looked at Geley's illustrations with interest. I note that the hands of the Medium when they appear in these pictures do not seem to be held as he says they were held. The head and face of a young woman are visible projecting from the body of the Medium, and it is certainly a very pretty face, rather of the Monna Lisa type, but when Dr. Geley assures me that it is a substantial face, I find myself sceptical. The eyes, the eyelids, the mouth and pose and expression of this being coming into our world from the mysterious outside remain absolutely the same throughout the séance in a series of photographs. But living eyes move. Living lips breathe. Living eyelids quiver. These do not. Living souls display interest. The more one looks at these pictures the less like a living face that face is seen to be and the more like a face painted or photographed on some distensible bladder. Dr. Geley considers many possibilities of fraud, but he never considers the part distensible pellicles may play in these manifestations. I find it more intelligible to suppose that this was the particular device adopted in this case than to suppose the hundred incredible things that are involved if one accepts this appearance as a "materialized" ghost.

Years ago in "Love and Mr. Lewisham" I ventured to hint that the possibilities of distensible skins were far too much neglected in the criticism of spiritualistic sêances. Dr. Geley's ideas recall that idea very vividly.

Another point about the material evidence for these phenomena upon which Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir Conan Doyle and their associates rest their belief in a whole second universe of immortal spirits interwoven with our own, is its unprogressive and unconfirmatory character. As Dr. Fournier d'Albe has recently pointed out in "Nature," these phenomena keep on repeating themselves with variations in the same vague and inconclusive way without ever coming to a gripping demonstration. In spite of the promises of "Pheneas," they never get on. There are changes in fashion, but no progress. With the tightening up of observation and the introduction of photography and moulds, for example, the noble and exalted figures put on record by John Tissot give place to these pellicular faces, to grotesque and horrible half-shapen things, and even to mere suggestively shaped lumps.

With the introduction of proper and complete photographic records of the mutterings of entranced Mediums there will probably be a very considerable diminution in the characteristic flavour that now makes the recognition of the revenants so facile. The phenomena still abound, but they deteriorate in quality even if they increase in abundance. We are

told of floods of spiritual light, and, behold, "Pheneas speaks!" Wonderful prophecies are spoken of. Where are they?

For me the most fatal line of thought for all this stuff lies in the steadily changing ideas of modern people about individuality. Beneath all these necromancies is an assumption of the complete and incurable integrity of the eternal human person from the rest of the universe. The normal man, who is unaccustomed to analysis, assumes, it may be too readily, that his self is something detached and *vis à vis* with all other things. It may end, but it cannot amalgamate.

But that may be no more than an innate delusion by which for our lifetimes we carry on a fight for certain qualities and characteristics against our environment. We are self-centred for the ends of life, and we are most of us so richly endowed with self-love and self-appreciation that we find it extremely difficult to imagine or tolerate an existence turning on some other centre to which we may be merely incidental and contributory. Yet we lay aside self in deep sleep, and in our moments of greatest exaltation, and for most of us who are over thirty, the self of childhood has already faded out for us.

We may be but parts of a larger whole, as the quivering cells in our living bodies are parts of us. Perhaps the blood corpuscles in our arteries have a dim sense of being living individuals in a crowded thoroughfare. Perhaps we ourselves share a mightier

immortality. Perhaps the dear lives we have loved close to our own are finished and done, not like something ended and cast away, but like beautiful deeds done for ever and fruitful for ever.

I do not know how new these ideas are to the reader, but he will find them set out very strikingly from the biological side in such a book as Huxley and Haldane's recent volume on "Animal Biology." Along that line he will come to conceptions of individuality and personality that will make the idea of Pheneas, who lived at Ur before the time of Abraham and was an Arab, "a magnificent man, honoured by all who knew him," who is "a great power" in the spirit world, and who now attends Sir Conan Doyle's lectures, directs his lecturing tours, advises in the choice of a new house, tells him when to take a day off in bed, knows "Johanna of Arc," considers "the state of the churches a scandal," and likes the room dark, as infantile and inadmissible as the nursery belief in Santa Claus or Old Bogey on the Stairs. "Pheneas" appears to be a new way of spelling "Phineas," and the learned tell us that Phineas is probably of Egyptian origin and means negro. Racial snobbery perhaps accounts for Pheneas claiming to be an Arab. This Pheneas, I venture to think, is an impostor, wrought of self-deception, as pathetic as a rag doll which some lonely child has made for its own comfort.

The men of Ur have lived and passed like the light upon the specks in yesterday's sunbeam that glowed

upon my retina. Ur the ancient is dust to-day, and mounds of rubbish and disused and worn-out things, and all its individual lives are a fading memory. If ever a gentleman with the un-Ur-like name of Pheneas enlivened its streets, he melted back into the universal stream of being when his enlivening was done. But Ur was a place of events and a seed of consequences that live and continue so long as man endures. And we too live and pass, reflecting for our moment, and in the measure of our capacity, the light and wonder of the Eternal.

And is not that enough?

*25 December, 1927.*

THE END

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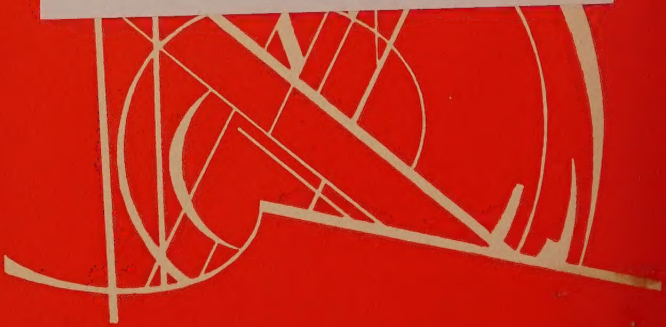

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